DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 166 834 **EA 011 345**

AUTHOR	Elam, Stanley M., Ed.
TITLE	A Decade of Gallup Polls of Attitudes Toward Education 1969-1978.
INSTITUTION	Phi Delta Kappa, Bloomington, Ind.
PUB DATE	78
NOTE	382p.; Not available in paper copy due to small print of original document
AVAILABLE FROM	Phi Delta Kappa, P.O. Box 789, Bloomington, Indiana 47401 ($5.50 postpaid)
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.83 Plus Postage. HC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*Changing Attitudes; *Community Attitudes; Educational Research; Elementary Secondary Education; *National Surveys; *Parent Attitudes; *Public Opinion; Questionnaires; Sampling; *School Surveys
IDENTIFIERS	*Gallup Poll

ABSTRACT

This book assembles in one indexed reference work all the Gallup polls on trends and issues in American education from 1969-78. These reports have gained a reputation as the most authoritative source in information available concerning the public's reaction to basic questions about the public schools. Each chapter discusses the major problems confronting public schools in a particular year as well as the purpose of the study and research procedures. An introductory chapter, written by Dr. Gallup, reviews some of the major opinion trends revealed by the polls. For instance, in 9 of 10 surveys, discipline is cited more often than any other problem, followed by busing, financial concerns, and student drug use. Gallup recommends greater citizen participation in the educational process. (Author/LD)

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A Decade of Gallup Polls of Attitudes Toward Education 1969-1978

Edited by Stanley M. Elam

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Phi Delta Kappa

Cover Design: Victoria S. Voelker

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 78-70725

ISBN 0-87367-767-6

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P.O. Box 789

Bloomington, IN 47401

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Preface

Since 1969 the Gallup organization has conducted an annual national poll of the public's attitudes toward the public schools. Although poll sponsorship has shifted, continuity has been provided by several persons. They include Dr. George Gallup himself, a former professor at the University of Iowa who has maintained a lifelong interest in education, Dr. B. Frank Brown, and Dr. Edward Brainard. Brown is director of information and services for I/D/E/A, education arm of the Kettering Foundation. Brainard is the former president of CFK Ltd., the Denver-based foundation that originated the poll and financed it for five years. He worked closely with the late Charles F. Kettering III, CFK Ltd. chairman. Brainard is now chairman of the State Committee, North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, with offices at the University of Northern Colorado, Greeley. Three years after Kettering's untimely death in 1972, CFK Ltd. was dissolved and the Ford Foundation financed the 1974 poll. From 1975 through 1978, the polls have been financed by I/D/E/A, whose executive director is Sam Sava. We are grateful for his enthusiastic support.

National panels have been formed each year to suggest questions for the poll. The services provided by these persons have been indispensable. Names of panelists are listed at the beginning of each poll reported in this volume.

The first Gallup education poll was published in full in the *I/D/E/A Reporter* in 1969 and was summarized in the

Phi Delta Kappan, as well as in several other education journals. Mr. Kettering and Dr. Brainard suggested inclusion of the complete second poll in one of the fall, 1970, issues of the *Kappan*. It thus became available in its entirety to 80,000 education leaders. The *Kappan* has published the complete poll annually ever since, usually in September. By 1978 the September issue carrying the tenth poll went to 122,000 members of Phi Delta Kappa and 18,000 nonmember subscribers. The sale of hundreds of thousands of reprints of the annual polls testifies to the interest attached to them by the education community.

In 1974 Phi Delta Kappa published a compilation of the first five polls under the title, *The Gallup Polls of Attitudes Toward Education 1969-1973*. The book was reprinted twice. In all, about 10,000 copies were distributed.

These numbers only suggest the growing impact of the Gallup education polls. While other measures could be reported, suffice it to say here that the poll has profoundly influenced education policy in the U.S. since 1970 as state and federal lawmakers, boards of education at all levels, and educators with policy-making and implementation responsibilities study the public reaction to basic questions about the public schools.

This volume brings together all 10 polls reported to date, as the title suggests. In addition, Dr. Gallup has prepared an introductory chapter reviewing some of the major opinion trends revealed by the polls. By early 1979 Phi Delta Kappa's Center for Dissemination of Innovative Programs will provide a complete kit for school district officials desiring to conduct a local poll. The basic manual of instructions and suggestions is being prepared for this kit by Dr. Gallup. Inquiries about the kit should be addressed to Dr. Wilmer Bugher, Associate Executive Secretary, Phi Delta Kappa, Box 789, Bloomington, IN 47401 (phone: 812/339-1156).

Stanley Elam
Director of Publications,
Phi Delta Kappa, and
Editor, *Phi Delta Kappan*

October 1, 1978

Chapter 1

The First 10 Years: Trends and Observations

By George H. Gallup

Events of the last decade have played an important role in shaping the public's attitudes toward the public schools. During the first half of the decade covered by these survey findings (1969-1973), the prevailing mood of the nation was one of disillusionment and, in the case of the young, revolt. In the post-Vietnam and post-Watergate years (1974-1978), a new conservatism has prevailed, abetted by ever-increasing inflation and higher taxes.

Costs of public school education have nearly doubled during the last 10 years, with a large share of the revenues to meet these costs coming from local property taxes.

When local residents learn through the media that high school students are being graduated who are functionally illiterate, that national test scores are declining, and that the schools are having problems with discipline, drug use, and vandalism, their predictable reaction is to question the added costs and the way the schools are being administered.

Out of this situation has come a demand for setting minimum requirements for graduation from high school and for holding teachers accountable, to a greater extent, for the educational progress of students. Likewise, the popularity of the back-to-basics movement stems largely from the same conservative urge to restore the structured education of earlier years.

The overall effect of these events and forces has been to lessen the public's respect for the public schools. Beginning in 1974, a five-point attitude scale was introduced in this survey series to measure the public's attitudes toward their local public schools. The same scale has been employed each year since, with results that show a steady decline in the public's regard for the schools. Significantly, the findings among parents with children enrolled in the public schools have paralleled the views of the general public.

The Major Problems

Throughout the decade covered by these surveys, discipline is the number one problem of the schools, as perceived by the public. In nine of 10 surveys, discipline has been cited more often than any other problem. By discipline, the public means such things as lack of respect for teachers, flouting rules and regulations, improper behavior in the classroom, and general disregard for authority.

During this same 10-year period, the problems associated with integration have been named often enough to place integration/segregation second only to discipline as the major problem facing the local schools. However, as pointed out in the earlier edition of this book covering the years 1969 to 1973, it is not integration itself that is the main source of the trouble but the means for bringing it about: namely, busing.

Third place in the list of major problems has generally been held by financial concerns. The failure to pass school bonds, the difficulty of keeping schools open in some cities, higher wage demands by teachers, problems arising out of tighter budgets – these have combined to place school financing high on the list of problems. Significantly, in the latest survey (1978) this problem has been edged out by the problem of growing drug use by students.

Some Conclusions

A careful examination of survey findings for the 10-year period leads to this conclusion: Many of the problems of the schools can be solved only if parents become much more involved than they presently are in the educational process. Parents must, in fact, be regarded as part of the teaching team. A joint and coordinated effort by parents and teachers is essential to deal more successfully with problems of discipline, motivation, and the development of good work habits at home and in school.

Fortunately, in these surveys parents have been found ready and willing to do their share. In the 1976 survey, for example, eight of every 10 persons questioned voiced their approval of courses for parents to help them assist their children in school. Younger parents favor this plan even more than older parents. Often overlooked is the fact that parents want their children to do well in school, just as they hope their children will do well in life. They want them to be responsible citizens and responsible students.

The type of instruction that parents themselves believe is most needed was detailed in the report of the 1977 survey. For little added expense (which the public is willing to pay), the public schools can, by working with parents, meet educational standards impossible to reach without such cooperation.

It can be argued that teachers and guidance counselors do not have the expertise to conduct such courses. But expert knowledge is not vital. Mostly what is required is that mothers and fathers meet, under the auspices of the school, to discuss ways, successful and unsuccessful, that educators have tried in dealing with the many problems of children of like age.

Observations About the Future

Unless measures are taken to alter present trends, a rocky and troubled future can be predicted for the public schools. Education itself has lost some of its appeal. In earlier years it was regarded as the surest way to financial success and social acceptance. Now a skilled worker who did not finish high school can earn as much as many college graduates. Social distinctions of earlier years are disappearing. The social elite today is a mixed breed. And a college degree means far less to the employer than it once did as a measure of the ability and the scholastic achievement of the applicant.

The role that education played in the past to assure upward mobility is not necessarily the same role that it will play in the future. This is not to say that education will be any less important. If fact, education may become a controlling factor in the pursuit of happiness in the postindustrial world, and in solving our personal problems and those of the nation and of the world.

On a more pragmatic level, there is need to develop a better rationale for providing greater financial support for the public schools. What has been taken for granted during the last century – that the nation required an educated citizenry and for this reason alone the public schools should be supported as a government function and responsibility – is a principle that has lost some of its cogency. In the 1978 survey, when people were questioned about sources of revenue for the public schools, a number of those interviewed voiced the opinion that people who do not have children in the public schools shouldn't be required to pay taxes to support the schools. And with educational costs going ever higher, this complaint will be heard more often.

One way to make certain that the public school system continues to command the strong support of the vast majority of citizens is to involve more citizens in the schools and in the educational process. Citizen participation can take many forms, and based upon survey data gathered during the last decade, these three are indicated:

1. *Greater efforts should be made to expand adult education and to use the schools as a meeting place for community affairs and cultural events.* A surprising number of those interviewed in the 1978 survey (four persons of every 10 adults) say they would be interested in taking an adult education course. While restrictions of time, cost, and availability would keep many from carrying out their expressed wishes, the fact that such a large number of persons – more individuals than are presently enrolled in elementary and secondary schools – say they would like to take a course is a good indication of the latent interest of a large segment of the population in continuing their education.

2. *The function of the school board is largely unknown or misunderstood.* Too often, serving on a local school board is a thankless job. The fact that the school board is supposed to represent the public and carry out its wishes in educational matters gets lost in day-to-day operations, school personnel problems, and finance. All of which leaves too little time, as school board members complain, to deal with the educational process itself.

One way out of this dilemma is to appoint citizen advisory committees. In the 1976 survey it was found that an extraordinary number of citizens interviewed said they would like to serve on a committee that would deal with any one of a wide range of problems, including discipline, student/teacher relations, career education, the handicapped student, student dropouts, and a dozen others.

The advisory committees would report to the school board, which could then take action as needed. The merit of this plan is that, in addition to the help and advice provided by the advisory committees, the active participation in school affairs of 100 to 200 of the community's citizens would almost certainly improve attitudes toward, and support for, the local school system.

3. *Courses for parents, discussed earlier, could and should involve scores of parents, bringing them into closer contact with teachers and school administrators.* Such a program would inevitably produce a better understanding between teachers and parents and should result in greater community support for the schools.

If these three programs were to be instituted in a school district, involving as they would many, many persons, the schools would command greater respect. But even more important, student achievement would be lifted to higher levels.

A New Crusade for Education

Educators should no longer assume that citizens feel deeply committed to support public school education. The high failure rate of school bond issues provides some evidence of this. Periodically, the public needs to be reconvinced that education is all-important. And unless educators take on this responsibility, they can be sure that no one else will.

As a start, it might be worthwhile to take the first two days of school in the fall and two days in the spring to appraise anew the importance of education. On the first day, community leaders might be brought before the entire student body to give their views on the importance of education today, with representatives of the local media in attendance. The second day might be given over to teachers to present to students enrolled in their classes the reasons why the subjects are important enough to include in the school curriculum and why they will help students in later life. One simple question often goes unanswered: "What good is this course to me?" And until it is answered to the student's satisfaction, achievement levels are likely to be affected adversely.

The public schools have lost favor with the American public during recent years. Therefore, heroic efforts must be devoted to restoring this lost confidence and respect. Hopefully, ground lost during the last decade will not only be recovered but education will become, as it should be, the central institution of American and world society.

Chapter 2

First Annual Gallup Poll of Public Attitudes Toward Education — 1969

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this survey, sponsored by CFK Ltd. and reported in the following pages, is to measure and record the attitudes of the American public toward the public schools in the year 1969. Benchmarks have been set to enable change to be measured in the years ahead.

The survey is national in scope and is based upon a representative sample of all adults. Results, it should be pointed out, do not apply to any single community, although they do provide a norm for comparison purposes.

Since attitudes and knowledge are closely related, many questions asked of respondents were included for the purpose of measuring the kind and amount of information possessed by representative citizens regarding their local schools.

An important objective of the study was to learn how typical citizens judge the quality of education in their local schools – the criteria they use in arriving at a judgment as to the excellence – or lack of it – in their local school system.

A realistic measure of the public's attitude toward their schools is the willingness of the people in a community to vote tax increases when there is need for greater financial assistance. A detailed analysis of the results obtained on this issue of taxes and financial aid is included in this report. Since school bond issues are being defeated with greater frequency across the nation, the survey results shed light on those groups in the nation most likely to support or to oppose bond issues calling for tax increases.

Other areas covered in the present survey deal with attitudes of the public toward teachers, the teaching profession, and toward their local school boards – the kinds of information the public would like to have regarding their local schools – the awareness of the public of school problems – and criticisms of school policies.

The study represents the joint planning of the staff of CFK Ltd. and the staff of Gallup International.

Research Procedure

The Sample. The sample embraced a total of 1,505 adults. It is described as a modified probability sample of the nation. A total of 327 interviewers took part in the survey; their work was done in every area of the country and in all types of communities, selected by random methods. These communities, taken together, represent a true microcosm of the nation.

The Interviewing Form. Questions included in the questionnaire were selected after many pretests were conducted in the Interviewing Center maintained by the Gallup organizations in Hopewell, New Jersey, and in a pilot study undertaken in 27 areas of the country.

Time of Interviewing. The field work for this study was conducted during the period of February 4 through February 20, 1969.

The State of Information About the Local Schools and Education

Judging by the answers to many questions included in this survey, the conclusion can be drawn that the public is only fairly well informed about the local schools and very poorly informed about education itself.

When adults comprising the sample of the general public were asked to give their own appraisal of the amount of their knowledge of the local schools, only about one in five (19%) replied, "quite a lot." At the other extreme more than four in ten (41%) frankly admitted that they know "very little."

Parents of children now attending the public schools were obviously better informed than those persons without children in the public schools, but even in this group of parents the percentage saying they know "quite a lot" about the local schools was not very impressive – 27%.

To measure the public's information about the schools, a series of test questions was included in the interviewing form. All persons in the survey were asked if they knew the names of their local school officials, with these results:

Percentage Who Knew Name Of	
The local superintendent of schools	56%
The principal of the elementary school in your neighborhood	47%
The principal of the high school attended by children in your neighborhood	40%
The president of the local school board	26%

To gain insight into the extent of the public's knowledge in particular areas, questions requiring a higher level of knowledge were included. These asked about the shortage of classroom space, the percentage of dropouts in the local schools, the percentage of high school graduates going on to college, the costs to educate each child.

Those who reported that they "didn't know" provide evidence of the lack of information in these special areas, and an unwillingness even to make a guess.

	Don't Know
Is there a shortage of classroom space?	15%
Are there many high school dropouts?	30%
What percentage of high school graduates go on to college?	33%
What is the cost to educate a child per year in the local schools?	57%

It should be pointed out that the above table lists only those who said they "don't know" or were unwilling to make a guess. Those who did reply were not necessarily accurate in their replies.

Perhaps the most revealing question is one that asked each person to give his idea of a good school – to cite the "things that would make you decide that a school is a *good* school." Most of the information that the public possesses about the schools concerns the happenings – the news – reported in the newspapers or through other media. Knowledge about education itself is very limited, at least the kind of knowledge that has to do with the curriculum and goals of education. For example, when those in the survey were asked to tell how they would judge a school – the things that would make them decide that a school is a good school – their answers reveal a very low level of sophistication.

The criterion most often cited is "qualified teachers," but the replies reveal that there is little understanding of what is meant by a "qualified teacher." The few who go on to explain what they mean by this term usually describe the "qualified teacher" as one who is capable of interesting the children in their schoolwork or one who gets along well with parents.

Second in importance in judging a "good school," based upon the number of mentions, is "discipline." About one-third of all persons included in this survey said that this is a way to judge the quality of a school.

The third criterion most often cited is the physical equipment – modern school buildings and equipment.

Because of the frequently voiced criticism about the "frills" in public school education, a higher percentage of those interviewed might have been expected to cite this as a way to judge the schools. But this did not prove to be the case. While a few say they would judge a school on the basis of the emphasis given to the three Rs, even more say that a good school offers a wide variety of courses that are interesting to the students. And a total of 4% mention specifically a "good library."

When all the persons included in the survey were asked to tell in what respects the local schools are "not so good," their answers generally fall into these categories: "lack of discipline," "overcrowding of students," "poor transportation," "buildings too old," "integration," "no prayers." Some complain about "poor teaching or poor teachers," but on the whole there is rather little complaint about the local schools, especially the quality of education.

When asked specifically to name the "biggest problems with which the public schools in this community must deal," the greatest number of mentions go to "discipline." Second in order of mention is the lack of school facilities (buildings and equipment.) Third in order of mentions are answers dealing with teachers – shortages, lack of proper selection, etc. Fourth comes finances and fifth comes "integration and segregation."

Communication with the Public

To establish base points in order to make comparisons possible in the future – and to see just how much and what type of information about the public schools is now reaching the general public, including parents of school children – a series of questions was included in the interviewing form that deal with the different media and the kinds of information received and the kind of information that the public would like to have.

The first question in this series asked: "During the last year, have you received any newsletter, pamphlet, or any other material telling what the local schools are doing?"

A total of 35% of the entire sample answered yes to this question. When this figure is analyzed, a marked difference appears between those with no children and those with children in the public schools. In the case of those who have no children, only 16% say they have received such material from the schools, as opposed to 57% of those who do have children now attending the local public schools.

A majority of all persons (60%) report that they have read articles in the local newspapers during the last month about the local schools – with little difference in the figures between those with and those without children in the schools. A total of 36% say they have heard something about the local schools on radio during the last month, and a similar percentage (35%) say they have seen something on television about the schools in this same period of time.

Among the various media, the preferred source of information is the newspaper. Individuals in the cross-section were asked: "From your own personal viewpoint, what is the best source of information about the local schools?" As stated, local newspapers are cited most often, followed in turn by personal communication (children, neighbors, etc.), school officials and personnel, radio and/or television, meetings at the school (PTA, school programs, etc.), and school newsletters/pamphlets and publications.

Important for the school community is the fact that people say they would like to know more about the schools. When they were asked: "Would you like to know more about the schools in this community?" nearly two-thirds (65%) said yes. This finding agrees with other studies that have dealt with the public's interest in education. Significantly, even a majority of those without children express an interest in more information about the schools.

When asked specifically what kind of information they would like to have, the answers deal to a large extent with the courses taught – the curriculum – innovations being introduced and why – college requirements – and the like. Significantly, there is great interest in the very areas that most school publicity presently neglects – the content of courses and the educational process versus school operations.

The Major Complaints

The greatest complaint against the schools of the country, at the present time, is lack of discipline. This fact comes to light in many ways in this survey. Undoubtedly the present importance of discipline in the minds of the people is the result of the rash of disorders on the college campuses of the nation – and in some high schools. From a public relations viewpoint, this criticism should be heeded – particularly by those school districts which are facing bond issues in the next year or two. Lack of proper discipline is often associated, as pointed out earlier, with "poor education." If school officials cannot keep students in line, then the school, in the eyes of the public, is a "poor" one.

To obtain the public's views on this issue, the following question was asked: "How do you feel about the discipline in the local schools – is it too strict, not strict enough, or just about right?"

Only 2% think it is "too strict" whereas 49% think it is "not strict enough." A total of 44% think it is "about right" with 5% having "no opinion." Parents with children in public school are inclined to be more satisfied with things as they are; 52% say discipline is "about right," 45% say it is "not strict enough," and 2% say it is "too strict."

Significantly, parents with children in parochial schools are the most critical of the public schools in the matter of discipline and cite as one advantage of the parochial schools (over the public schools) the better discipline maintained in the former.

Criticism of the schools in respect to discipline is greatest in the big cities of the nation, greater among Negroes than among whites, and greater among low income groups than among upper income groups.

Criticism of lack of discipline in the public schools extends to the failure to do more about the way boys and girls dress for school. When all those included in the survey were asked if they thought there should be "greater regulation of the way children dress for school, or less?" the replies show the following division:

Regulation of Dress

For greater regulation	53%
For less regulation	7%
All right at present	36%
No opinion	4%

Again, the replies show that the better educated are the least critical and of the major religious groups, Catholics are the most critical.

Attitudes Toward Teaching and Teachers

Probably no better measure of the public's high esteem for teaching and for schools could be found than parents' views toward teaching as a profession. When asked if they would like to have a child take up teaching in the public schools as a career, three out of every four say they would. And in the case of parents with children now in the public schools, the ratio is even higher – four out of five.

The weight of opinion is that teachers' salaries are too low. Although nearly half say they are "about right" and only 2% think they are "too high," one-third (33%) think they are too low.

On the question as to whether teachers should be given automatic raises, or whether these raises should be given to some and not to others, there is an equal division of opinion – 44% say yes; 45% say no; 11% have no opinion.

Of those with opinions, more favor permitting teachers to join unions than oppose this; but a substantial majority oppose giving teachers the right to strike.

Throughout the nation the public recognizes the difficulty of getting *good* teachers and holding them. Only a third of those reached in the survey say that in their own local schools there is no difficulty getting good teachers, and only a third say that there is no difficulty in keeping them.

Although there seems to be general satisfaction with the teachers, this should not be taken as approval of the entire teaching staff. The question of tenure was not asked specifically, but respondents were asked if some of the teachers in the local school system should be dropped. A total of 38% said yes; 22% said no; 40% had no opinion. The reasons most often given for dropping teachers were incompetence, personality problems, age problems – teachers too young or too old.

Attitudes Toward School Boards And Their Problems

Across the country school boards generally are thought to be doing a good job. More than three times as many respondents give them an "excellent" rating as give them a "poor" rating. And when asked specifically about their work, or aspects of it, the ratings are high. In only one important respect is their work questioned. When asked if the school board in their local community is politically motivated – if local politics play a part in the decisions made by the school board – more answer yes than answer no.

The generally high regard in which school boards are held is reflected in the question put to each individual in the survey: "If some one asked you to be a school board member, would you be interested?"

Nearly one person in three (31%) said he would, if asked. Analysis of the data shows that more men than women would like to serve (35% to 29%). Of those who have had the advantage of a college education, nearly half say they would be interested; in the professional and business group 41% say they would be interested; and interest in becoming a school board member is highest in the youngest age group – those ages 21 to 30. In this group 52% say they would be interested.

The fact that these respondents say they would be interested does not mean that they will volunteer, or go through an expensive and time-consuming political campaign to be elected. If these practices could be removed, there would be no dearth of qualified men and women to serve on the school boards of the nation.

To gain further insight into local school problems, as the public sees them, each person in the survey was asked what changes in the school system he would favor if he were to become a school board member.

Nearly three-fourths of those who have children in the public schools made specific suggestions. These concern chiefly the professional staff, the course content or curriculum, and the buildings and facilities. The category getting the next largest number of suggestions was "discipline."

This suggestion, discipline, comes up particularly high with parents of children in parochial schools.

Local school boards are thought by 69% of the respondents to work hard to "improve the quality of education." Nearly as many (62%) say the school board "works hard to see that the schools function efficiently and at the lowest cost." The greatest criticism is leveled at the cost of school buildings. A total of 40% think they are more expensive than they need to be.

Citizen Participation

In another survey of the adult population, it was found that most citizens think that the school buildings should be used for community purposes as well as for students.* In most towns and cities this policy is followed. To find out just how many persons had made use of school facilities, this question was asked: "Have you attended any lecture, any meeting, or any social occasion in any local school building during the last year?"

Nearly six in 10 (59%) of the respondents who now have children in the public or parochial schools of the community have. Only one person in six (17%) of those without children in school answer yes to this question.

On the other hand, rather few have *ever* attended a meeting of the local school board. In the entire group only 16% say they have *ever* attended a school board meeting.

Slightly more than half (52%) of the parents of children in the local schools say they belong to the PTA or to a similar group. A higher percentage (65%) of those with children in parochial schools say they belong to such a group.

Whereas more than half of the parents of children in the public schools say they belong to some kind of parents' group, fewer than half of this group say they attend regularly. When those who do not attend regularly were asked to tell why they did not go more often, most cited such things as "no one to care for the children," "conflict with other commitments," and similar reasons. Some say that not much gets accomplished – "it is a waste of time."

Persons who do not belong to parents' groups, even though they have children in the schools, gave somewhat similar reasons for not joining. About one in 10 said there was no PTA, or similar organization, in his community. Others say they have only recently moved into the community – more say they are not "joiners."

Financial Support

The best measure of the attitudes of the general public toward the public school system in America is its readiness to support the schools financially – to vote for an increase in taxes if the schools need more money.

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*C. F. Kettering Foundation Survey by Gallup International, *Parent's Reactions to Educational Innovations*, May, 1966.

Obviously the situation varies from community to community across the nation; an infinite variety of financial problems exist and there is an infinite variety of ideas as to how best to deal with them.

Many efforts were made to find a question wording which 1) would measure general attitudes applicable to most situations, and 2) could be repeated from year to year to measure change in attitudes. Obviously the ideal question would show a high correlation with known facts – the proportion of communities voting in favor or against school bond issues. In this sense, it could be predictive.

With these requirements in mind, the question that was finally used on the interviewing form is worded as follows:

> **Suppose the local public schools said they needed much more money. As you feel at this time, would you vote to raise taxes for this purpose, or would you vote against raising taxes for this purpose?**

Analysis of the vote recorded on this question reveals the groups or segments of society in which support of the public schools is greatest and least. Those who are involved in school bond campaigns may find this information useful, although it should be pointed out again that no two local situations in the nation are exactly alike. But the chances are great that in any given community the attitudes of the various groups will not depart too greatly from the national norm.

Those who analyze the results of school bond issues must always take account of the low voter turnout in the typical school bond election. One fact is clear – those who bother to vote are *not* typical of those who do not vote. The situation is not unlike that found in elections for political office in the United States. In presidential races only slightly over 60% of the population of voting age will take the trouble to register and vote. In school bond elections the percentage tends to be far less. Fortunately for the schools, the nonvoters in these elections tend to be more negative in their attitudes than those who do vote, judging from the data obtained in this study.

For example, in answer to the question about voting more funds for the local school, as stated above, the vote in favor is 45%; against, 49%; and 6% are in the "don't know" category. If only those who say they voted in the last school bond election are used as the base, the vote for and against is almost exactly even.

A look at the vote by groups is most revealing.

Level of education reached turns out to be an important factor. In fact, on the basis of the major breakdowns provided in this study, it is the most important factor. The better educated are more inclined to vote favorably on school bond issues than the less well educated. Below are the votes on the question:

Suppose the local public schools said they needed much more money. As you feel at this time, would you vote to raise taxes for this purpose, or would you vote against raising taxes for this purpose?

Vote by Level of Education

	For	Against	No Answer or Don't Know
	%	%	%
College graduate	61	34	5
College incomplete	54	43	3
Technical, trade, business school	52	47	1
High school graduate	44	50	6
High school incomplete	41	54	5
Grade school or less	33	59	8

Although it could be argued that it is the lower income, lower educated persons who have the most to gain, it is the better educated who understand best the value of an education and, at the same time, are the ones who become most involved in the local schools – the ones who take the most active part in school affairs.

Since education and income are closely related, it is to be expected that those in the highest income brackets are more in favor of voting for taxes to help the schools than those in the lower income levels. Results by income levels show the following:

Vote by Income Levels

Annual Family Income	For	Against	No Answer or Don't Know
	%	%	%
$15,000 and over	55	41	4
$10,000 to $14,999	49	47	4
$7,000 to $9,999	46	48	6
$5,000 to $6,999	47	50	3
$4,000 to $4,999	41	53	6
$3,000 to $3,999	42	48	10
Under $3,000	33	59	8

Vote by Age Levels

	For	Against	No Answer or Don't Know
	%	%	%
21 to 29 years	56	39	5
30 to 49 years	47	48	5
50 and over	39	55	6

It should be noted that the younger age groups are better educated than the older groups. The percentage of those who have attended college is highest in the 21 to 29 group and lower in each older age group.

It is to be expected that parents with children in the public schools would vote more favorably on school financial requests than those who have no children in the schools or have children in the parochial schools. Here are the figures:

Children in the Schools

	For	Against	No Answer or Don't Know
	%	%	%
Parents of children now attending public schools	51	44	5
Parents of children now attending parochial schools	40	56	4
Adults with no children in school	41	53	6

As a group, Protestants are more in favor than Catholics. When all Protestants are compared with all Catholics –

both those with and without children in school – the following results are obtained:

	For %	Against %	No Answer or Don't Know %
Protestants	47	47	6
Roman Catholics	41	55	4

Observations and Conclusions

Three of the major tasks of the public school system in the United States can be stated as follows: first, to interest a greater number of citizens in the public schools; second, to increase financial support as needs grow; third, to create a climate in the community and in the schools favorable to an improvement in the quality of education.

In a sense, and as the data from this survey show, all of these problems tend to be interrelated. When the survey results dealing with the many aspects of education embraced in this survey are examined, these conclusions seem warranted:

1. While the American people seem reasonably well-informed about school activities, they are ill-informed about education itself.
2. Since they have little or no basis for judging the quality of education in their local schools, pressures are obviously absent for improving the quality.
3. Fortunately, the public would like more information about modern education – the new methods being tried and new ideas about the kind of education that is needed. In short, they need and ask for the kind of information that is presently not provided by the various media of communication.
4. From a public relations viewpoint, the biggest problem at the present time for the schools is the matter of discipline. This is the greatest criticism the public makes of the schools and the school officials. Those who have no children complain the loudest, but even those with children in the public schools criticize school officials and personnel for not being more strict in the matter of deportment and dress of students. As long as this complaint about the

public schools is present, the vote on school bond issues is likely to suffer accordingly.

5. The teaching profession probably has never been held in higher esteem in this nation. This is complimentary to those who are in the profession – but the urge to get into this field, on the part of so many students today, may create another problem in another decade or two.

6. The public has accepted the right of teachers to join unions. But the public has not yet accepted the right of teachers to strike, and, judging from the data, many reject the idea of tenure, at least until better ways are found for weeding out incompetent teachers.

7. The weight of opinion is that public school teachers are underpaid. But this situation is changing and the number holding such an opinion is far less than it was a decade ago.

8. School boards get a high vote of approval across the nation. The public believes they work hard to improve the quality of education and to run the schools efficiently. At the same time, some believe that their decisions are often politically motivated.

9. There is no dearth of individuals who would be interested in becoming school board members. But, as other studies have shown, most do not want to fight their way through political campaigns, requiring a lot of time and money, in order to serve the public in this capacity.

10. The public schools do a reasonably good job of interesting parents in school affairs. They do a very poor job in reaching those who do not have children attending the schools. A better way must be found to reach those persons in the community who do not happen to have children in the public schools, so that these persons may become informed, involved, and active. The future of the schools to a great extent depends on success in achieving this goal.

11. If willingness to vote additional taxes for schools saying they need more money is accepted as a good test of the public's attitudes toward the public schools, then the nation divides itself about evenly. This does not mean that one-half of the nation is opposed to the public schools. It means simply that approximately half would resist requests for more money – and presumably vote against new bond issues.

12. An important factor that works in favor of getting school bond issues accepted is the simple fact that those groups or segments of society that are opposed are those least likely to cast their ballots in these elections. The best-educated tend to be most favorable and most likely to vote; the least well-educated make up the group least favorable but, at the same time, least likely to vote. This observation holds only for the nation as a whole. This does not mean that in some situations the opposite may not be true.

13. Finally, the survey helps to explain the slowness of the schools to accept innovations. So much effort is consumed in keeping the schools operating and doing a reasonably good job that little time can be devoted by school officials in promoting change. The public is so uninformed about innovations and so lacking in objective ways of judging school achievement that little, if any, pressure is exerted by them to make improvements, or is likely to be exerted until they are more knowledgeable in this area.

The State of Information About the Local Schools and Education

How much do you know about the local schools, quite a lot, some, or very little?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Quite a lot	18	12	27	21
Some	40	30	50	50
Very little	42	58	23	29
	100	100	100	100

Do you happen to know the name of the superintendent of schools?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes	56	46	68	58
No	44	54	32	42
	100	100	100	100

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Do you happen to know the name of the principal of the elementary school in your neighborhood?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes	47	24	76	47
No	53	76	24	53
	100	100	100	100

Do you know the name of the principal of the high school attended by the children in your neighborhood?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes	40	26	58	35
No	60	74	42	65
	100	100	100	100

Now, a few questions about the local school board. First, do you happen to know the name of the president of the board?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes	26	21	32	28
No	72	76	67	72
No answer	2	3	1	--
	100	100	100	100

Do you think there is a shortage of classroom space in this community?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes	56	49	65	51
No	29	29	29	35
Don't know/ no answer	15	22	6	14
	100	100	100	100

What is your guess as to the cost per child per year in the public schools of your community?

	National Totals	No Children In Schools	Public School Parents	Parochial School Parents
	%	%	%	%
Gave a $ figure	43	40	45	54
Don't know	57	60	55	46
	100	100	100	100

Are there many high school dropouts in this community?

	National Totals	No Children In Schools	Public School Parents	Parochial School Parents
	%	%	%	%
Quite a few	26	24	28	24
Almost none	41	36	46	44
Don't know	30	37	22	27
Commented: average, even one is too many, etc.	3	3	4	5
	100	100	100	100

What percentage of the high school graduates from your high school go on to college, do you think?

	National Totals	No Children In Schools	Public School Parents	Parochial School Parents
	%	%	%	%
Gave an actual % figure	67	65	70	75
Don't know	33	35	30	25
	100	100	100	100

What do you think are the biggest problems with which the public schools in this community must deal?

	National Totals	No Children In Schools	Public School Parents	Parochial School Parents
	%	%	%	%
Discipline	26	27	24	39

Facilities	22	17	27	26
Teachers	17	14	20	24
Finances	14	15	15	7
Integration/ segregation	13	15	12	8
Parents lack of interest	7	7	7	5
Transportation	5	5	5	5
Curriculum	4	3	5	9
Pupils lack of interest	3	4	3	4
Miscellaneous	8	7	8	5
There are no problems	4	3	6	1
Don't know/ no answer	13	17	9	13
	136*	134*	141*	146*

*Totals exceed 100% due to multiple answers by respondents.

Have you read any book in the last year that deals with education?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes	16	15	17	19
No	84	85	83	81
	100	100	100	100

What is the name of the book(s)?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
1 title given	4	4	5	4
2 titles given	2	2	2	--
3 titles given	--	--	--	2
4-6 titles given	1	--	1	--
No titles given	10	9	10	12
	17*	15*	18*	18*

*Equals percent of persons reading any book dealing with education during the last year.

Communication with the Public

During the last year, have you received any newsletter, pamphlet, or any other material telling what the local schools are doing?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes	35	16	57	44
No	61	81	39	52
Can't recall	4	3	4	4
	100	100	100	100

During the last month have you read any articles in the newspapers about local schools?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes	60	54	65	77
No	34	39	29	17
Can't recall	6	7	6	6
	100	100	100	100

Have you heard anything about local schools on radio during this period?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes	36	32	39	46
No	58	61	55	51
Can't recall	6	7	6	3
	100	100	100	100

How about television?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes	35	33	36	53
No	59	61	59	43
Can't recall	6	6	5	4
	100	100	100	100

From your own personal viewpoint, what is the best source of information about the local schools?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Local newspaper	38	41	34	46
Word of mouth: own children, students, neighbors	25	21	31	15
School personnel	20	17	23	16
Radio & TV	16	19	11	18
Meetings at school	15	11	20	19
School publications	8	5	12	11
Don't know/ no answer	6	9	2	3
	123*	123*	135*	126*

*Totals exceed 100% due to multiple answers by respondents.

Would you like to know more about the schools in this community?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes	65	55	77	74
No	35	45	23	26
	100	100	100	100

Same question, answers by other categories.

	Yes %	No %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
Sex			
Men	65	34	1
Women	66	34	*
Race			
White	64	35	1
Nonwhite	76	24	--

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Gallup Polls of Attitudes Toward Education, 1969-1978

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Education			
Elementary grades	54	46	--
High school incomplete	66	34	*
High school complete	67	33	--
Technical, trade, or business school	77	22	1
College incomplete	75	24	1
College graduate	62	37	1
Occupation			
Business and professional	68	32	--
Clerical and sales	67	33	--
Farm	67	33	--
Skilled labor	70	30	--
Unskilled labor	73	26	1
Non-labor force	45	54	1
Age			
21 to 29 years	75	24	1
30 to 49 years	73	27	--
50 years and over	51	48	1
Religion			
Protestant	67	33	--
Roman Catholic	66	34	--
Jewish	47	51	2
All others	59	41	--
Region			
East	62	37	1
Midwest	67	33	--
South	69	30	1
West	63	37	--
Income			
$15,000 and over	63	36	1
$10,000 to $14,999	73	27	--
$ 7,000 to $ 9,999	68	31	1
$ 5,000 to $ 6,999	68	31	1
$ 4,000 to $ 4,999	73	27	--
$ 3,000 to $ 3,999	54	45	1
$ 2,500 to $ 2,999	51	49	--
Under $2,499	45	54	1
Community size			
500,000 and over	59	41	*
50,000 to 499,999	69	31	*
25,000 to 49,999	74	26	--
Under 25,000	68	31	1

*Less than 1%

The Major Complaints

How do you feel about the discipline in the local schools – is it too strict, not strict enough, or just about right?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Too strict	2	2	2	--
Not strict enough	49	52	45	58
Just about right	44	39	52	36
Don't know/ no answer	5	7	1	6
	100	100	100	100

Same question, answers by other categories.

	Too Strict %	Not Strict Enough %	Just About Right %	Don't know/ No Answer %
Sex				
Men	1	54	40	5
Women	2	45	47	6
Race				
White	2	47	46	5
Nonwhite	1	69	29	1
Education				
Elementary grades	*	53	41	6
High school incomplete	2	52	43	3
High school complete	2	50	43	5
Technical, trade or business school	1	45	48	6
College incomplete	1	54	40	5
College graduate	1	36	54	9
Occupation				
Business and professional	1	42	50	7
Clerical and sales	1	48	46	5
Farm	4	42	53	1
Skilled labor	*	53	44	3
Unskilled labor	2	54	39	5
Non-labor force	1	55	37	7

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Age				
21 to 29 years	4	45	44	7
30 to 49 years	1	49	46	4
50 years and over	1	52	41	6
Religion				
Protestant	1	49	46	4
Roman Catholic	1	50	44	5
Jewish	*	58	33	9
All others	7	46	32	15
Region				
East	1	51	42	6
Midwest	2	47	46	5
South	1	47	47	5
West	2	55	38	5
Income				
$15,000 and over	1	46	48	5
$10,000 to $14,999	1	46	48	5
$ 7,000 to $ 9,999	3	50	43	4
$ 5,000 to $ 6,999	1	49	43	7
$ 4,000 to $ 4,999	1	57	40	2
$ 3,000 to $ 3,999	4	46	48	2
$ 2,500 to $ 2,999	*	51	42	7
Under 2,499	2	56	33	9
Community Size				
500,000 and over	2	61	32	5
50,000 to 499,999	1	55	38	6
25,000 to 49,999	5	46	49	*
Under 25,000	2	37	56	5

*Less than 1%.

Some people feel the schools do not go far enough in regulating the way boys and girls dress for school. Do you think there should be greater regulation of the way children dress for school, or less?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Greater	53	55	50	63
Less	7	7	5	4
All right as it is	36	31	42	32
No opinion	4	7	3	1
	100	100	100	100

Same question, answers by other categories.

	Greater %	Less %	All Right As Is %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
Sex				
Men	54	6	35	5
Women	53	7	36	4
Race				
White	53	7	36	4
Nonwhite	54	6	33	7
Education				
Elementary grades	58	3	31	8
High school incomplete	60	5	29	6
High school complete	53	5	39	3
Technical, trade, or business school	60	3	37	--
College incomplete	47	11	38	4
College graduate	43	12	42	3
Occupation				
Business and professional	50	10	37	3
Clerical and sales	51	10	36	3
Farm	36	3	60	1
Skilled labor	56	4	34	6
Unskilled labor	58	5	31	6
Non-labor force	55	7	34	4
Age				
21 to 29 years	44	18	34	4
30 to 49 years	53	4	39	4
50 years and over	58	4	33	5
Religion				
Protestant	53	6	36	5
Roman Catholic	60	4	33	3
Jewish	42	14	42	2
All others	34	22	40	4
Region				
East	53	6	35	6
Midwest	49	7	41	3
South	55	6	34	5
West	58	7	31	4
Income				
$15,000 and over	49	9	36	6
$10,000 to $14,999	51	8	39	2
$ 7,000 to $ 9,999	51	5	41	3
$ 5,000 to $ 6,999	53	6	35	7

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$ 4,000 to $ 4,999	68	3	23	6
$ 3,000 to $ 3,999	58	8	32	2
$ 2,500 to $ 2,999	45	6	47	2
Under $2,499	57	9	25	9
Community size				
500,000 and over	55	7	32	6
50,000 to 499,999	56	6	33	5
25,000 to 49,999	54	5	41	--
Under 25,000	50	6	40	4

Attitudes Toward Teaching and Teachers

Would you like to have a child of yours take up teaching in the public schools as a career?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes	75	69	81	78
No	15	18	12	14
Don't know/ no answer	10	13	7	8
	100	100	100	100

Same question, answers by other categories.

	Yes %	No %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
Sex			
Men	71	17	12
Women	78	14	8
Race			
White	74	16	10
Nonwhite	75	15	10
Education			
Elementary grades	75	14	11
High school incomplete	72	18	10
High school complete	73	15	12
Technical, trade, or business school	71	16	13
College incomplete	78	16	6
College graduate	80	13	7

Occupation			
Business and professional	75	15	10
Clerical and sales	76	18	6
Farm	83	16	1
Skilled labor	73	14	13
Unskilled labor	75	12	13
Non-labor force	72	18	10
Age			
21 to 29 years	65	18	17
30 to 49 years	77	14	9
50 years and over	75	16	9
Religion			
Protestant	76	14	10
Roman Catholic	76	14	10
Jewish	63	30	7
All others	59	22	19
Region			
East	73	17	10
Midwest	76	13	11
South	73	16	11
West	78	15	7
Income			
$15,000 and over	82	11	7
$10,000 to $14,999	74	17	9
$ 7,000 to $ 9,999	74	16	10
$ 5,000 to $ 6,999	74	13	13
$ 4,000 to $ 4,999	83	10	7
$ 3,000 to $ 3,999	71	12	17
$ 2,500 to $ 2,999	60	29	11
Under $2,499	69	19	12
Community size			
500,000 and over	71	17	12
50,000 to 499,999	73	18	9
25,000 to 49,999	82	13	5
Under 25,000	78	13	9

Do you think salaries in this community for the teachers are too high, too low, or just about right?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Too high	2	3	2	2
Too low	33	30	35	27
Just about right	43	43	44	47
Don't know/ no answer	22	24	19	24
	100	100	100	100

Do you think teachers should be given automatic raises or should raises be given to some and not to others?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes, automatic	44	45	45	32
No, not automatic	45	43	47	51
No opinion	11	12	8	17
	100	100	100	100

How do you feel about teachers joining labor unions?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Those Who Are In Agreement				
Yes	23	22	24	33
Yes, if they want to do so	12	11	13	4
Yes, for bargaining power	7	7	7	8
Yes, their own union	3	3	3	--
Yes, if conditions justify	--	--	–	4
	45	43	47	49
Those Who Are Against				
No	33	33	33	33
No, it is a profession	5	6	4	8
No, they are public servants	1	2	–	–
No, this would only give them power to strike	1	*	1	2
	40	41	38	43
No opinion	3	3	3	3
Miscellaneous	1	2	1	*
Don't know/ no answer	11	11	11	5
	15	16	15	8
Totals	100	100	100	100

*Less than 1%

Note: Questions asked earlier this year through the Gallup Poll find a higher proportion of respondents in favor of permitting teachers to join labor unions. The question was worded differently, which may account for the difference. Both, however, show majorities in favor.

Do you think teachers should have the right to strike?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Those Who Say "Yes"				
Yes	19	19	19	19
Yes, if conditions justify	10	11	11	10
Yes, it is their right	8	7	8	6
	37	37	38	35
Those Who Say "No"				
No	38	37	36	39
No, it hurts the children	11	11	11	10
No, public servants should find another way	8	7	8	11
No, it sets a poor example	2	2	2	2
	59	57	57	62
Don't know/ no answer	4	6	5	3
Totals	100	100	100	100

Note: Questions asked earlier this year through the Gallup Poll show almost exactly the same results on the question of the right of teachers to strike.

Do you think this local public school system has a hard time getting good teachers?

	National Totals %	No Children In School %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes	52	49	54	51
No	32	31	34	34
Don't know/ no answer	16	20	12	15
	100	100	100	100

Do you think this local public school system has a hard time keeping good teachers?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes	48	46	49	48
No	35	31	40	34
Don't know/ no answer	17	23	11	18
	100	100	100	100

Do you think there are some teachers in the local public school system who should be dropped or fired? If "yes," why?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes	38	32	45	39
No	22	19	27	15
Don't know/ no answer	40	49	28	46
	100	100	100	100
Reasons Why				
Incompetent	21	19	24	24
Personality problems	9	7	11	6
Too young/ too old	5	3	7	4
Lack of communication with children	3	2	4	4
Miscellaneous	1	1	2	2
Don't know/ no answer	3	3	3	4
	42*	35*	51*	44*

*Exceeds total replying "yes" because some respondents gave more than one answer.

From what you know, are teachers in your community pretty well satisfied with their pay and working conditions or are they dissatisfied?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Satisfied	35	32	39	33
Dissatisfied	35	35	35	35
Don't know/ no answer	30	33	26	32
	100	100	100	100

Are teachers in this community paid more money, or less money, than teachers in other comparable communities?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
More	12	11	12	14
Less	17	16	20	11
About same	34	34	35	36
Don't know/ no answer	37	39	33	39
	100	100	100	100

Attitudes Toward School Boards and Their Problems

How good a job do you think the school board does?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Excellent	25	22	29	25
Above average	16	14	19	12
Fair	21	20	22	17
Poor, terrible	7	6	9	7
Don't know/ no answer	31	38	21	39
	100	100	100	100

Do you think it is politically motivated? That is, do local politics play a part in decisions made by the board?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes	44	43	44	46
No	39	35	44	33
Don't know/ no answer	17	22	12	21
	100	100	100	100

If someone asked you to be a school board member, would you be interested?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes	31	27	35	39
No	67	71	64	58
Don't know/ no answer	2	2	1	3
	100	100	100	100

Why do you say that?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Those Who Say "Yes"				
Interested in helping	27	24	29	32
Am qualified	4	3	1	5
	31	27	30	37
Those Who Say "No"				
Not qualified	31	33	30	20
Don't have time necessary	15	9	22	25
Not interested	9	11	6	7
Have no children in school	9	17	*	3

*Less than 1%

Too much responsibility	6	5	7	1
	70	75	65	56
No answer	5	5	5	7
Totals	106*	107*	100	100

*Totals exceed 100% due to multiple answers by respondents.

If someone asked you to be a school board member, would you be interested?

	Yes %	No %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
Sex			
Men	34	64	2
Women	29	70	1
Race			
White	30	69	1
Nonwhite	40	56	4
Education			
Elementary grades	13	82	2
High school incomplete	26	73	1
High school complete	28	71	1
Technical, trade, or business school	40	59	1
College incomplete	51	47	2
College graduate	44	55	1
Occupation			
Business and professional	41	58	1
Clerical and sales	36	62	2
Farm	17	82	1
Skilled labor	29	69	2
Unskilled labor	29	69	2
Non-labor force	21	78	1
Age			
21 to 29 years	52	47	1
30 to 49 years	32	66	2
50 years and over	20	78	2
Religion			
Protestant	30	68	2
Roman Catholic	34	64	2
Jewish	28	70	2
All others	37	63	--

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Region			
East	32	66	2
Midwest	32	67	1
South	31	68	1
West	31	67	2
Income			
$15,000 and over	37	62	1
$10,000 to $14,999	41	58	1
$ 7,000 to $ 9,999	33	65	2
$ 5,000 to $ 6,999	27	72	1
$ 4,000 to $ 4,999	28	70	2
$ 3,000 to $ 3,999	21	76	3
$ 2,500 to $ 2,999	22	73	5
Under 2,499	21	78	1
Community size			
500,000 and over	32	67	1
50,000 to 499,999	33	65	2
25,000 to 49,999	28	69	3
Under 25,000	30	69	1

If you were to become a school board member, what changes in the schools would you favor?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Curriculum, courses, course content	15	14	16	19
Professional staff	14	11	20	13
Building & facilities	11	8	15	10
Better discipline	9	9	9	11
Financial	4	5	4	4
Transportation	3	2	4	5
Segregation/integration	2	2	1	2
Miscellaneous	2	2	3	5
	60	53	72	69
I'd make no changes; it's all right as is	11	10	12	7

Don't know/ no answer	44	50	36	40
Totals	115*	113*	120*	116*

*Totals exceed 100% due to multiple answers by respondents.

Does it work hard to improve the quality of education?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes	69	63	77	63
No	11	10	12	16
Don't know/ no answer	20	27	11	21
	100	100	100	100

Does it work hard to see that schools function efficiently and at the lowest cost?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes	62	56	70	58
No	15	15	15	19
Don't know/ no answer	23	29	15	23
	100	100	100	100

Do you think that school buildings are more expensive than they need to be?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes, in general	26	27	23	33
Yes, too fancy, too elaborate	14	13	13	18

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No, in general	42	40	47	34
No, they are not good enough	7	7	7	4
Don't know/ no answer	11	13	10	11
	100	100	100	100

Do you think money is spent foolishly by the school authorities or the local school board?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes	26	26	25	31
No	65	62	70	61
Don't know/ no answer	9	12	5	8
	100	100	100	100

Citizen Participation

Have you attended any lecture, any meeting, or any social occasion in any local school building during the last year?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes	37	17	59	56
No	59	77	41	43
No answer	4	6	–	1
	100	100	100	100

Same question, answers by other categories.

	Yes %	No %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
Sex			
Men	33	63	4
Women	40	57	3

		First Annual Poll	
Race			
White	37	60	3
Nonwhite	33	60	7
Education			
Elementary grades	14	83	3
High school incomplete	28	68	4
High school complete	39	57	4
Technical, trade, or business school	40	58	2
College incomplete	51	44	5
College graduate	57	42	1
Occupation			
Business and professional	51	47	2
Clerical and sales	38	58	4
Farm	53	43	4
Skilled labor	37	60	3
Unskilled labor	31	64	5
Non-labor force	13	82	5
Age			
21 to 29 years	33	60	7
30 to 49 years	50	49	1
50 years and over	22	72	6
Religion			
Protestant	37	59	4
Roman Catholic	39	59	2
Jewish	23	75	2
All others	37	63	--
Region			
East	33	64	3
Midwest	42	54	4
South	33	63	4
West	44	53	3
Income			
$15,000 and over	50	46	4
$10,000 to $14,999	53	44	3
$ 7,000 to $ 9,999	40	58	2
$ 5,000 to $ 6,999	34	61	5
$ 4,000 to $ 4,999	25	71	4
$ 3,000 to $ 3,999	16	81	3
$ 2,500 to $ 2,999	16	75	9
Under $2,499	11	85	4
Community size			
500,000 and over	34	64	2
50,000 to 499,999	33	61	6
25,000 to 49,999	44	56	--
Under 25,000	40	56	4

Have you *ever* attended a school board meeting?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes	16	14	18	15
No	81	82	81	83
No answer	3	4	1	2
	100	100	100	100

Do you belong to the PTA or a similar group?

	Public School Parents	Parochial School Parents
Yes	52	65
No	48	35
	100	100

If "no": Since you do have children in school, what are your reasons for not belonging to the PTA or a similar group?

No time	21	11
Not interested	11	10
No PTA or similar group	9	10
New in this area	2	1
Health prevents attending	2	--
Miscellaneous	1	3
Don't know/no answer	2	--
	48*	35*

*Total equals number who do not belong.

If 'belong to PTA': Do you attend meetings regularly during the school year, or not?

Regularly	22	36
Not regularly	30	28
No answer	--	1
	52*	65*

*Equals percent of those belonging to PTA.

If "not regularly": Will you please tell why you do not regularly attend?

	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
No time	20	18
Not interested	6	5
Health prevents attending	1	1
Miscellaneous	3	1
Don't know/no answer	1	3
	30*	28*

*Equals percent of those not regularly attending PTA.

Financial Support

Suppose the local public schools said they needed much more money. As you feel at this time, would you vote to raise taxes for this purpose, or would you vote against raising taxes for this purpose?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
For	45	41	51	40
Against	49	53	44	56
Don't know/ no answer	6	6	5	4
	100	100	100	100

Same question, answers by other categories.

	For %	Against %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
Sex			
Men	47	48	5
Women	43	50	7

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Race			
White	46	49	5
Nonwhite	45	47	8
Education			
Elementary grades	32	60	8
High school incomplete	41	54	5
High school complete	44	50	6
Technical, trade, or business school	52	47	1
College incomplete	54	43	3
College graduate	61	34	5
Occupation			
Business and professional	56	40	4
Clerical and sales	44	52	4
Farm	31	62	7
Skilled labor	46	47	7
Unskilled labor	39	56	5
Non-labor force	41	53	6
Age			
21 to 29 years	56	39	5
30 to 49 years	47	48	5
50 years and over	39	55	6
Religion			
Protestant	47	47	6
Roman Catholic	41	55	4
Jewish	47	51	2
All others	48	44	8
Region			
East	47	48	5
Midwest	40	54	6
South	50	44	6
West	43	51	6
Income			
$15,000 and over	55	41	4
$10,000 to $14,999	49	47	4
$ 7,000 to $ 9,999	46	48	6
$ 5,000 to $ 6,999	47	50	3
$ 4,000 to $ 4,999	41	52	7
$ 3,000 to $ 3,999	42	48	10
$ 2,500 to $ 2,999	38	53	9
Under 2,499	32	61	7
Community size			
500,000 and over	45	51	4
50,000 to 499,999	47	46	7
25,000 to 49,999	31	64	5
Under 25,000	46	48	6

Did you happen to vote in the last school bond election?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes	41	36	45	49
No	49	55	44	40
Can't recall	10	9	11	11
	100	100	100	100

Can you recall how you voted? Did you vote for or against the bond?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
For	26	21	33	22
Against	10	11	8	15
Can't recall	5	4	4	12
	41*	36*	45*	49*

*Total equals percent of respondents voting in last school bond election.

Some people say that the federal government should pay all of the cost of a college education. Others believe that most of the costs should continue to be paid, as now, by parents and students. Which would you favor?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Federal government pay	16	15	17	12
Parents & students pay	70	71	69	70
Federal government & parents/students	7	8	7	9
Other methods	4	3	4	4
Don't know/ no answer	3	3	3	5
	100	100	100	100

Composition of the Sample

Analysis of Respondents

	National Totals	No Children In Schools	Public School Parents	Parochial School Parents
Base figures	1,505	756	656	114
Percent of total	100%	50%	44%*	7*

*Total exceeds 50% because some parents have children attending more than one kind of school.

Analysis of Number of Children Attending Schools Whose Parents Are Respondents

Total Number of Children Attending Elementary And Secondary Schools 1,578

Number attending public schools	1,319
Number attending parochial schools	228
Number attending private day schools	20
Number attending private boarding schools	3
Number attending nursery schools, day-care centers, Head Start, etc.	8

Respondents are:

Sex	**Raw Figure**	**%**
Men	748	50
Women	757	50
	1,505	100
Race		
Whites	1,343	89
Nonwhites	149	10
Others	13	1
	1,505	100

Could you tell me the kind of business or industry the chief wage earner (head of household) in your immediate family works in and the kind of work he does there?

	Raw Figure	%
Business and professional	409	27
Clerical and sales	168	11
Farm	70	5
Skilled labor	270	18
Unskilled labor	312	21
Non-labor force	243	16
Undesignated	33	2
	1,505	100

What was the last grade or class you completed in school?

Elementary grades	262	18
High school incomplete	269	18
High school complete	471	31
Technical, trade or business school	88	6
College incomplete	200	13
College graduate	215	14
	1,505	100

Did you attend the schools in the community in which you now live?

Yes	478	32
No	1,018	68
No answer	9	--
	1,505	100

And what is your age, please?

21 to 29 years	263	18
30 to 49 years	674	45
50 years and over	562	37
Undesignated	6	*
	1,505	100

*Less than 1%

What is your religious preference — Protestant, Roman Catholic, or Jewish?

Protestant	1,014	67
Roman Catholic	380	25

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Jewish	57	4
All others	54	4
	1,505	100

(Show card 'X', side 1) Would you please give me the letter of the group which best represents the total annual income, before taxes, of all of the members of your immediate family living in your household?

	Raw Figure	%
$15,000 and over	195	13
$10,000 to $14,999	291	19
$ 7,000 to $ 9,999	374	25
$ 5,000 to $ 6,999	220	15
$ 4,000 to $ 4,999	122	8
$ 3,000 to $ 3,999	83	6
$ 2,500 to $ 2,999	55	4
Under $2,499	139	8
Undesignated	26	2
	1,505	100

Note: Each of the Gallup surveys includes a section titled "Design of the Sample." Because these sections are almost identical in each survey, only the most recent is included in this compilation. It appears in Chapter 11.

Chapter 3

Second Annual Gallup Poll of Public Attitudes Toward Education — 1970

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the survey reported in the following pages is to measure and record the attitudes of the American public toward the public schools in the year 1970. Benchmarks have been set to enable change to be measured in the years ahead. Also, some questions have been asked that were asked in the 1969 survey in order to see if any changes have occurred within the year.

The survey is national in scope and is based upon a representative sample of all adults. Results, it should be pointed out, do not apply to any single community, although they do provide a norm for comparison purposes.

As in our 1969 survey, we are pointing out that a realistic measure of the public's attitude toward their schools is the willingness of the people in a community to vote tax increases when there is need for greater financial assistance. A detailed analysis of the results obtained on a series of questions dealing with taxes and financial aid to public and parochial schools is included in this report. Since school bond issues are being defeated with greater frequency across the nation, the survey results shed light on those groups in the nation most likely to support and to oppose bond issues calling for greater tax increases.

Other areas covered in this survey deal with attitudes of the public toward holding educators accountable for the progress of students, toward giving students a voice in school policies and procedures, toward sex education in the schools, and toward change and innovation.

This study represents the joint planning of the staff of CFK Ltd. and the staff of Gallup International.

Research Procedure

The Sample. The sample embraced a total of 1,592 adults. It is described as a modified probability sample of the nation. The work was done in every area of the country and in all types of communities, selected by random methods. These communities, taken together, represent a true microcosm of the nation. A full description of the adult sample will be found at the end of this report.

The sample also included a total of 299 students. These were boys and girls, one from almost every community included in the adult sample, who were enrolled in either the junior or senior classes in high school in April, 1970. Demographic information about these students appears in the section of the report entitled "Composition of the Sample."

The Interviewing Form. Questions included in the adult questionnaire were selected after many pretests were conducted in the Interviewing Center maintained by the Gallup organizations in Hopewell, New Jersey. Questions included in the high school student questionnaire were selected from the adult questionnaire, where applicable. When questions on the adult questionnaire were not applicable to the students, questions appearing on questionaires previously administered to college freshmen in another survey were used.

Time of Interviewing. The field work for this study was conducted during the period of April 15 through 20, 1970.

Observations and Conclusions

The 1970 survey of the public's attitudes toward the public schools, in addition to covering many areas not embraced in the 1969 study, offers some important clues to the future.

People continue to have a high regard for the schools of their community and they believe firmly that education is the royal road to success in America. Yet there is undeniably a new mood in the nation with which educators must reckon.

Student protests, both at the high school and college level, have, in the case of the curricula, opened the whole issue of whether education in America is reality-related. Students as well as adults are beginning to question the judgment of educators — the experts.

Budgets and bond issues are being voted down in increasing number. Evidence of this trend is to be found in the results of the present study. The U.S. Office of Education reports that in the last year (fiscal 1969) school bond issues were voted down by voters at a record rate. By dollar value, voters approved less than 44% of the $3.9 billion in bond issues put to the electorate. The $1.7 billion that passed comprised the lowest total since 1962. A decade ago 80% of such bond issues were approved.

The costs of education, as is true of everything else, increase constantly, and it is perhaps inevitable that as these costs mount, taxpayers are likely to become increasingly critical of educational policies.

When people read or hear about the lack of discipline in the schoolrooms of their own community — and the inability of administrators to cope with these and other problems — they see their tax money being wasted and the whole purpose of the schools perverted.

Few citizens take the time and trouble to inquire into the causes of these difficulties, or to appraise objectively the merits of the case from the educators' point of view. The end result, consequently, is likely to be another vote cast against the new bond issue or next year's budget.

Up to this point in history, the majority of citizens have been quite willing to take the word of the school board and of the teachers and administrators that the schools are doing a good job. They have looked with pride on the community's school buildings and its winning football or basketball teams. These have been good enough to convince many that the local schools are good. But evidence in the present study indicates that this way of judging the quality of education may be in for a change.

Most would like to have more objective data on student achievement. In fact, the proportion who would like to have national tests administered in the local schools as a way to measure student progress and achievement and to compare progress with other schools is at a high level, as reported in this study.

One other fact needs to be pointed out. More than half of all parents of children in the schools today have had the advantage of some high school or college education. They can fall back on their own educational experience as a way to judge the progress of their children, something that was not possible a generation or two ago.

The well-educated parent is pro-education. He is the one most likely to vote in a school election, and he is most likely to vote yes on financial issues. Yet he is also likely to be more critical of school policies and the achievement or lack of achievement shown by his own children.

The public has an appetite for more information about the schools and what they are doing or trying to do. If the schools hope to avoid financial difficulties in the years ahead, they need to give far greater attention to this task of informing the public. And it isn't simply a matter of "selling" present policies. Public relations is a two-way street. It is important to tell the public about the schools, but it is also incumbent upon the schools to listen to the public's views and after serious examination take steps to meet just criticisms.

The Public Names the Biggest Problem Facing the Public Schools

The public again, in 1970, cites discipline as the greatest problem of the schools in their own communities. Next in order of mention come the problems of integration/segregation (busing), the problem of getting financial support for the schools, "good" teachers, and improving school buildings and facilities. The use of drugs and dope by students is mentioned often enough to place this relatively new problem in sixth place.

When those interviewed are asked specifically about discipline, only 2% say that discipline is "too strict." Slightly more than half (53%) say that discipline is "not strict enough." Another 31% say it is "just about right" and the remainder (14%) say they "do not know."

During the year the percentage of those saying that discipline is "not strict enough" has climbed four points. Parents of children enrolled in public schools are evenly divided between saying that discipline is "not strict enough" and that it is "just about right." Persons who have no children in school and parents of students enrolled in parochial schools are of the belief that discipline is not strict enough in the public schools. Negro parents are even more critical of the public schools on the point of discipline.

Surprisingly, more students say that discipline is "not strict enough" than say it is "too strict." The majority (60%) say that discipline is "just about right."

Who should assume more responsibility for correcting this situation?

When those who say that discipline is "not strict enough" are asked this question, a plurality of the adults say "the school" – teachers, administrators, or the school board. Slightly fewer adults say the parents should assume more responsibility. When the same question is put to the high school juniors and seniors who say that discipline is "not strict enough," the majority hold the teachers and school administrators responsible – not the parents.

In the report on discipline which was included in the first annual audit of education in 1969, it was pointed out that overall attitudes toward the schools are likely to be prejudiced by what the public believes is too much laxity or permissiveness in matters of discipline.

Parents are even more in favor of spanking than are teachers. When the National Education Association Research Division surveyed classroom teachers recently, it was found that 57% favor spanking. When parents of public school students were interviewed in this Second Annual Survey, 66% were in favor of spanking. A total of 29% disapproved, 5% had "no opinion." The issue of corporal punishment is becoming more widely discussed chiefly because of the lack of discipline and the increased disruption of the classrooms by students. Every one of the 50 states, with the exception of New Jersey, permits corporal punishment, although many schools have banned the practice. In many communities teachers have insisted on spanking rights in order to maintain discipline.

Teacher and Administrator Accountability

With the cost of maintaining the public schools rising year by year, the public's demand for some kind of measurement of student progress is certain to grow. There are obviously many factors that cannot be taken fully into account in the rating of schools. However, the argument that communities differ so greatly and that the home environment of students varies so much that comparisons are impossible can be answered to a large extent by present research techniques which permit the matching of samples. The computer can overcome many of the earlier problems of comparing one community with another and one school system with another.

Included in the interviewing form in the present survey were several questions designed to approach the subject of accountability in various ways.

The first question asked:

Would you like to see the students in the local schools be given national tests so that their educational achievement could be compared with students in other communities?

The adult public approves this idea. In fact, the vote on this question was 75% in favor, 16% opposed.

Another question presented the issue of greater accountability more directly:

Would you favor or oppose a system that would hold teachers and administrators more accountable for the progress of students?

The result was very much the same. A total of 67% of the adults voted in favor, 21% opposed the idea, and the remaining 12% had "no opinion."

Going one step further, another question asked:

Should each teacher be paid on the basis of the quality of his work or should all teachers be paid on a standard scale basis?

This question, of course, assumes that "quality of work" of a teacher can be determined in an objective manner – which many doubt. The principle of paying anyone on a standard basis – and overlooking his individual effort and success – runs counter to the prevailing ethos of the nation, especially in occupations that are regarded as professional. The results of this question indicate that adults regard teachers as they do other professional groups – 58% believe teachers should be paid on the "quality of work" and 36% believe teachers should be paid on a "standard scale basis."

A question about "tenure" probed this same area. The question asked was designed chiefly to gauge reactions to the general principle of tenure:

> **Many states have "tenure" laws, which means that a teacher cannot be fired except by some kind of court procedure. Are you for giving teachers tenure or are you against tenure?**

In reply to this question, 35% of the adults said they favored tenure laws, 53% opposed them.

In recent years, teacher organizations have become active in their own interest in many cities and sections of the nation. The adult public was asked this question:

> **Have teacher organizations gained too much power over their own salaries and working conditions?**

The response throughout the nation was 26% yes, 53% no.

Student Power

Parents and high school juniors and seniors hold widely differing views on the role students should play in determining such matters as curriculum, teachers, school rules, and school dress. Most parents, in each instance, believe that students "should not have more say" about what goes on within the school. Students, on the other hand, believe they should. The nearest the two groups come to agreeing is in the case of teachers – but even there the spread is 31 percentage points in their views.

The differences are revealed in the following results:

Should high school students have more say about what goes on within the school on matters such as curriculum? teachers? school rules? student dress?

	Yes %	No %	No Opinion %
Curriculum?			
Parents of children in public schools	40	55	5
High school juniors and seniors	83	15	2
Teachers?			
Parents of children in public schools	22	74	4
High school juniors and seniors	53	43	4
School Rules?			
Parents of children in public schools	38	58	4
High school juniors and seniors	77	22	1
Student Dress?			
Parents of children in public schools	40	56	4
High school juniors and seniors	76	23	1

Also, in the matter of awareness of student protests, a wide difference is found between students and parents. When asked if there have been any student protests in the schools during the present year (that is, between September, 1969, and April, 1970) nearly four in 10 of the students interviewed said yes, whereas only two in 10 of parents said there had been such protests.

Financial Support for the Public Schools

Opposition to voting more taxes for the local public schools increased during the year. This, of course, must be interpreted against a background of many developments in the economy – higher real estate taxes, inflation, and a greater struggle on the part of most families to make ends meet.

How to obtain adequate financial support is perhaps the most serious problem of the public schools in the United States, and a problem that needs more attention on the part of school administrators and school board members.

Persons in the lowest income and education levels are found to be most opposed to meeting new financial needs. On the other hand, these are the persons least likely to get to the polls on election day. Even so, opposition to paying more taxes for the schools is apparently growing even among those who normally could be expected to vote on this issue.

The vote by age levels, by level of education, and by those who have children in the public schools as opposed to those who do not, is instructive.

Suppose the local *public* schools said they needed much more money. As you feel at this time, would you vote to raise taxes for this purpose, or would you vote against raising taxes for this purpose?

	For %	Against %	No Opinion %
Age of Respondents			
21 - 29 years	44	49	7
30 - 49 years	40	56	4
50 years and over	32	60	8
Education of Respondents			
Elementary grades	28	63	9
High school incomplete	33	60	7
High school complete	33	61	6
Technical, trade, or business school	48	48	4
College incomplete	47	48	5
College graduate	61	33	6
Children in School			
Public school parents	43	54	3
Parochial school parents	37	58	5
No children in school	35	57	8

A majority of those questioned across the nation would like to transfer some of the burden of supporting the local schools from local real estate taxes to the state government. Whether this attitude springs from a genuine concern for the property owner or from the belief that respondents, as taxpayers, have to pay less if the state pays more is not apparent in the data. The vote in favor of asking the state government to bear a greater share of local school expenses is 54% to 34%.

In the poorer communities, where education costs per child are likely to be almost as great as in the richer communities, the shift would come as welcome and needed relief. It appears then, that the long-term trend is likely to be in the direction of lessening the burden on real estate to provide for the financial needs of the public school system.

Tax Aid for Parochial Schools

A hotly debated issue in many states is the extent to which parochial schools should be given financial aid by government sources. The Supreme Court has still to rule on important aspects of this issue. But at the present time, the public is willing to give favorable consideration to those who claim that such financial aid is needed to help the parochial schools make ends meet.

The question asked:

> **It has been proposed that some government tax money be used to help parochial schools make ends meet. How do you feel about this? Do you favor or oppose giving some government tax money to help parochial schools?**

The vote on this issue was fairly close, with 48% in favor of giving some government tax money to parochial schools and 44% opposed.

When the vote is analyzed by groups, it is seen that parents of children in the public schools are evenly divided; parochial school parents are understandably in favor – but not to the extent that one might expect.

The Allotment (Voucher) System

Some nations follow a plan of alloting a certain sum of money for the education of each child. The parents can then decide whether to send the child to a public, a private, or a parochial school. This proposal, now referred to in the United States as the "voucher plan," will actually be tried experimentally during the next few years in test communities, according to present plans.

Sentiment is rather evenly divided on adopting this proposal here in the United States, with a slight majority opposed. The national figures last spring were 46% opposed, 43% in favor. Parents of children in the public schools opposed by a vote of 49 to 41; those whose children were enrolled in parochial schools favored this plan by a vote of 48 to 40.

The vote was close enough to give real concern to those who believe the voucher plan carries with it a real threat to the quality of public school education.

Sex Education in the Schools

By an overwhelming majority, parents expressed their approval of sex education in the public schools. The vote of parents was 72% in favor to 22% opposed. Lowest approval was found among those who had no children of school age, yet even in this group the favorable vote was two to one.

In the opinion of a majority of parents with children enrolled in the public schools, sex education should include a discussion of birth control. The vote in favor was nearly two to one – actually 60% to 32%.

The same liberal viewpoint came to light in the results of a question which asked if married girls who attend high school and who are pregnant should be permitted to attend. In the case of parents, the vote was 49% in favor to 46% opposed. For all groups, including those who did not have children in school, the vote was almost a standoff – 46% in favor, 47% opposed.

The same three questions were put to high school juniors and seniors. Predictably, they were even more liberal in their views than were their parents. A total of 89% favored sex education courses; 82% approved of discussions of birth control; and 57% believed married pregnant high school girls should be permitted to attend classes.

Use of Drugs

The American public has become aware of a serious drug problem in their own public schools.

Even in the less densely populated areas of the country, there is increasing recognition of drug usage among school children. The figures for different areas of the country and for different sizes of communities are instructive.

Marijuana and other drugs are increasingly being used by students. Do you think it is a serious problem in your public schools?

	Yes %	No %	Don't Know %
Area of Country			
East	69	19	12
Midwest	55	28	17
South	60	25	15
West	78	12	10
Size of Community			
500,000 and over	77	11	12
50,000 - 499,999	76	11	13
25,000 - 49,999	75	10	15
Under 25,000	48	36	16

Interestingly, students differed somewhat with their parents as to the seriousness of the problem in their own schools. While two out of three adults (actually 64%) said the problem is serious, only 39% of high school juniors and seniors agreed.

There was not much conviction on the part of either adults or students that the schools are "doing a good job of teaching the bad effects of drug use." In the case of adults, the number who said the schools are not doing a good job, or have no opinion, adds up to 61%.

High school juniors and seniors were about evenly divided on this issue, 49% saying the schools are doing a good job of teaching the bad effects of drugs, 45% saying they are not.

Change and Innovation

Students were far more critical of the curriculum than were their parents. A clear majority of high school juniors and seniors believed that the school curriculum in their own community "needs to be changed to meet today's needs." Parents by almost the same percentage said the curriculum is all right as it is. Stated in percentages, the students by a vote of 58 to 40 said the curriculum needs to be changed; their parents by a vote of 59 to 33 said it is satisfactory as it is.

The same generation gap came to light on a question which dealt specifically with innovation. Forty-three percent of students interviewed expressed the opinion that "the local public schools are not interested enough in trying new ways and methods," while only 19% believed that the local schools are "too ready to try new ideas." In the case of parents of public school children the vote was nearly even, 20% saying the schools are not interested enough in trying new ideas, 21% saying they are "too ready." The remainder had no opinion or said that the schools, in respect to trying new ideas, are "just about right."

Year-Around Schools

The question of keeping the schools open the year around to utilize school buildings and facilities to the full extent did not receive majority support either on the part of parents or of high school students. Yet it should be pointed out that, with educational costs mounting yearly, there is an important part of the population who do believe this idea has merit.

The favorable vote on this idea last April was rather considerable. A total of 42% of all adults favored it; 50% opposed; 9% had no opinion.

Rather surprisingly, 40% of the students themselves liked the idea; 58% opposed it.

In an earlier study, it was found that many parents oppose the idea of year-around schools chiefly because they believe such a change would interfere with their own vacation plans. With more and more parents taking winter vacations – or choosing some time of the year other than July and August – opposition to this plan can be expected to decline, especially if it can be substantiated that real economies will ensue.

The Major Problems

What do you think are the biggest problems with which the public schools in this community must deal?

	National Totals	No Children In School	Public School Parents	Parochial School Parents	High School Juniors & Seniors
	%	%	%	%	%
Discipline	18	18	18	20	17
Integration/ segregation	17	19	14	14	21
Finances	17	14	20	23	12
Teachers	12	11	15	12	21
Facilities	11	8	14	11	24
Dope/drugs	11	10	12	12	13
Curriculum	6	5	8	4	11
Parents' lack of interest	3	3	3	3	1
Transportation	2	3	2	2	3
School board policies	2	2	3	1	--
School administration	1	†	2	1	3
Pupils' lack of interest	†	†	1	2	5
Miscellaneous	3	3	3	2	8
There are no problems	5	3	7	5	2
Don't know/ no answer	18	21	11	18	5
	126*	120*	133*	130*	146*

†Less than 1%.

*Totals exceed 100% because some respondents gave more than one answer.

How do you feel about the discipline in the local public schools — is it too strict, not strict enough, or just about right?

	National Totals	No Children In School	Public School Parents	Parochial School Parents	High School Juniors & Seniors
	%	%	%	%	%
Too strict	2	2	2	2	15
Not strict enough	53	57	48	50	23

Second Annual Poll

Just about right	31	21	47	37	60
Don't know/ no answer	14	20	3	11	2
	100	100	100	100	100

Same question, answers by other categories.

	Too Strict	Not Strict Enough	Just About Right	Don't Know/ No Answer
	%	%	%	%
Sex				
Men	2	54	31	13
Women	2	52	31	15
Race				
White	2	52	32	14
Nonwhite	4	62	21	13
Education				
Elementary grades	1	55	28	16
High school incomplete	2	56	32	10
High school complete	2	50	35	13
Technical, trade, or business school	1	62	16	21
College incomplete	3	55	26	16
College graduate	2	47	39	12
Occupation				
Business and professional	1	52	32	15
Clerical and sales	3	52	34	11
Farm	3	42	51	4
Skilled labor	2	54	31	13
Unskilled labor	3	57	30	10
Non-labor force	†	53	24	23
Age				
21 to 29 years	4	41	35	20
30 to 49 years	2	51	38	9
50 years and over	†	61	24	15
Religion				
Protestant	2	53	33	12
Roman Catholic	2	56	27	15
Jewish	--	54	25	21
All others	3	44	31	22
Region				
East	2	54	28	16
Midwest	†	58	31	11
South	3	48	36	13
West	1	52	29	18

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Income				
$15,000 and over	†	47	40	13
$10,000 to $14,999	2	58	27	13
$ 7,000 to $ 9,999	2	52	34	12
$ 5,000 to $ 6,999	1	56	30	13
$ 4,000 to $ 4,999	3	47	36	14
$ 3,000 to $ 3,999	--	54	37	9
Under $2,999	3	51	21	25
Community size				
500,000 and over	1	61	23	15
50,000 to 499,999	1	58	26	15
25,00 to 49,999	--	70	22	8
Under 25,000	3	44	40	13

†Less than 1%.

If [discipline] "not strict enough," ask: Who should assume more responsibility for correcting this situation?

	National Totals	No Children In School	Public School Parents	Parochial School Parents	High School Juniors & Seniors
	%	%	%	%	%
Teachers	16	16	16	17	12
School administration	16	17	16	12	7
Parents	30	33	24	29	4
School board	6	6	5	8	2
Students	2	2	2	3	5
Others	2	3	1	†	--
Don't know	2	2	†	2	1
	74*	79*	64*	71*	31*

†Less than 1%.

*Totals exceed percentage replying "not strict enough" in previous questions because some respondents gave more than one answer.

Spanking and similar forms of physical punishment are permitted in the lower grades of some schools for children who do not respond to other forms of discipline. Do you approve or disapprove of this practice?

	National Totals	No Children In School	Public School Parents	Parochial School Parents	High School Juniors & Seniors
	%	%	%	%	%
Approve	62	60	66	66	40
Disapprove	33	34	29	31	56
No opinion	5	6	5	3	4
	100	100	100	100	100

Marijuana and other drugs are increasingly being used by students. Do you think it is a serious problem in your public schools?

	National Totals	No Children In School	Public School Parents	Parochial School Parents	High School Juniors & Seniors
	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	64	69	56	69	39
No	22	16	31	18	59
Don't know	14	15	13	13	2
	100	100	100	100	100

Do you feel that the local public schools are doing a good job of teaching the bad effects of drug use?

	National Totals	No Children In School	Public School Parents	Parochial School Parents	High School Juniors & Seniors
	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	39	34	47	39	49
No	25	26	24	24	45
Don't know	36	40	29	37	6
	100	100	100	100	100

Have there been any demonstrations protesting school policies or procedures in your public schools during this present school year?

	National Totals	No Children In School	Public School Parents	Parochial School Parents	High School Juniors & Seniors
	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	19	18	19	18	39
No	64	56	75	74	59
Don't know	17	26	6	8	2
	100	100	100	100	100

Teacher and Administrator Accountability

Would you like to see the students in the local schools be given national tests so that their educational achievement could be compared with students in other communities?

	National Totals	No Children In School	Public School Parents	Parochial School Parents	High School Juniors & Seniors
	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	75	74	75	80	76
No	16	14	19	15	23
No opinion	9	12	6	5	1
	100	100	100	100	100

Do you think the students here would get higher scores than students in similar communities, or not so high?

	National Totals	No Children In School	Public School Parents	Parochial School Parents	High School Juniors & Seniors
	%	%	%	%	%
Our students higher	21	18	25	21	26
Our students not so high	15	15	18	14	19
About the same	44	44	40	49	47
Don't know	20	23	17	16	8
	100	100	100	100	100

Should each teacher be paid on the basis of the quality of his work or should all teachers be paid on a standard scale basis?

	National Totals	No Children In School	Public School Parents	Parochial School Parents	High School Juniors & Seniors
	%	%	%	%	%
Quality of work	58	57	61	52	59
Standard scale basis	36	36	35	43	39
No opinion	6	7	4	5	2
	100	100	100	100	100

Would you favor or oppose a system that would hold teachers and administrators more accountable for the progress of students?

	National Totals	No Children In School	Public School Parents	Parochial School Parents	High School Juniors & Seniors
	%	%	%	%	%
Favor	67	66	68	71	65
Oppose	21	21	21	19	29
No opinion	12	13	11	10	6
	100	100	100	100	100

Many states have "tenure" laws, which means that a teacher cannot be fired except by some kind of court procedure. Are you for giving teachers tenure or are you against tenure?

	National Totals	No Children In School	Public School Parents	Parochial School Parents	High School Juniors & Seniors
	%	%	%	%	%
For	35	38	29	28	30
Against	53	48	60	62	61
No opinion	12	14	11	10	9
	100	100	100	100	100

Have teacher organizations gained too much power over their own salaries and working conditions?

	National Totals %	No Children In School %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %	High School Juniors & Seniors %
Yes	26	27	25	24	17
No	53	49	58	57	72
No opinion	21	24	17	19	11
	100	100	100	100	100

How do you feel about having guidance counselors in the public schools? Do you think they are worth the added cost?

	National Totals %	No Children In School %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %	High School Juniors & Seniors %
Yes, worth it	73	69	79	79	83
Not, not worth it	16	17	14	12	16
No opinion	11	14	7	9	1
	100	100	100	100	100

Student Power

Should high school students have more say about what goes on within the school on matters such as curriculum? teachers? school rules? student dress?

	National Totals %	No Children In School %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %	High School Juniors & Seniors %
Curriculum					
Yes	38	36	40	42	83
No	53	53	55	51	15
No opinion	9	11	5	7	2
	100	100	100	100	100

Teachers					
Yes	22	22	22	20	53
No	72	70	74	76	43
No opinion	6	8	4	4	4
	100	100	100	100	100
School rules					
Yes	36	34	38	39	77
No	58	58	58	56	22
No opinion	6	8	4	3	1
	100	100	100	100	100
Student dress					
Yes	37	35	40	32	76
No	57	57	56	64	23
No opinion	6	8	4	4	1
	100	100	100	100	100

Financial Support

Suppose the local public schools said they needed much more money. As you feel at this time, would you vote to raise taxes for this purpose, or would you vote against raising taxes for this purpose?

	National Totals	No Children In School	Public School Parents	Parochial School Parents
	%	%	%	%
For	37	35	43	37
Against	56	57	53	58
Don't know/ no answer	7	8	4	5
	100	100	100	100

Same question, answers by other categories.

	For	Against	Don't Know No Answer
	%	%	%
Sex			
Men	38	56	6
Women	37	56	7
Race			
White	38	56	6
Nonwhite	35	58	7

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Education			
Elementary grades	28	63	9
High school incomplete	33	60	7
High school complete	33	61	6
Technical, trade, or business school	48	48	4
College incomplete	47	48	5
College graduate	61	33	6
Occupation			
Business and professional	54	40	6
Clerical and sales	38	58	4
Farm	32	65	3
Skilled labor	34	61	5
Unskilled labor	29	63	8
Non-labor force	32	59	9
Age			
21 to 29 years	45	48	7
30 to 49 years	40	56	4
50 years and over	32	60	8
Religion			
Protestant	36	57	7
Roman Catholic	36	59	5
Jewish	59	41	--
All others	45	43	12
Region			
East	41	54	5
Midwest	34	58	8
South	36	57	7
West	39	55	6
Income			
$15,000 and over	49	47	4
$10,000 to $14,999	41	55	4
$ 7,000 to $ 9,999	40	55	5
$ 5,000 to $ 6,999	31	59	10
$ 4,000 to $ 4,999	33	56	11
$ 3,000 to $ 3,999	27	66	7
Under $2,999	27	64	9
Community size			
500,000 and over	38	56	6
50,000 to 499,999	36	57	7
25,000 to 49,999	49	49	2
Under 25,000	37	57	6

It has been suggested that state taxes be increased for everyone in order to let the state government pay a greater share of school expense and to reduce local property taxes.

Would you favor an increase in state taxes so that real estate taxes could be lowered on local property?

	National Totals %	No Children In School %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
For	54	54	53	61
Against	34	34	36	32
No opinion	12	12	11	7
	100	100	100	100

Tax Aid for Parochial and Private Schools

It has been proposed that some government tax money be used to help parochial schools make ends meet. How do you feel about this? Do you favor or oppose giving some government tax money to help parochial schools?

	National Totals %	No Children In School %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %	High School Juniors & Seniors %
Favor	48	47	47	59	56
Oppose	44	44	47	33	36
No opinion	8	9	6	8	8
	100	100	100	100	100

In some nations, the government allots a certain amount of money for each child for his education. The parents can then send the child to any public, parochial, or private school they choose. Would you like to see such an idea adopted in this country?

	National Totals %	No Children In School %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %	High School Juniors & Seniors %
Favor	43	43	41	48	66

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Oppose	46	46	48	40	27
No opinion	11	11	11	12	7
	100	100	100	100	100

Sex Education in the Schools

Do you approve or disapprove of schools giving courses in sex education?

	National Totals %	No Children In School %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %	High School Juniors & Seniors %
Approve	65	61	72	71	89
Disapprove	28	32	22	22	8
No opinion	7	7	6	7	3
	100	100	100	100	100

Would you approve or disapprove if these courses discussed birth control?

	National Totals %	No Children In School %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %	High School Juniors & Seniors %
Approve	56	52	60	63	82
Disapprove	35	38	32	28	12
No opinion	9	10	8	9	6
	100	100	100	100	100

Some girls get married before they are through high school. If they become pregnant, should they be permitted to attend?

	National Totals %	No Children In School %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %	High School Juniors & Seniors %
Yes	46	45	49	46	57
No	47	47	46	48	38
No opinion	7	8	5	6	5
	100	100	100	100	100

Change and Innovation

Do you feel that the local public schools are not interested enough in trying new ways and methods or are they *too ready* to try new ideas?

	National Totals %	No Children In School %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %	High School Juniors & Seniors %
Not interested enough	20	21	20	16	43
Too ready to try new ideas	21	20	21	25	19
Just about right	32	25	42	36	34
Don't know	27	34	17	23	4
	100	100	100	100	100

Do you think the school curriculum in your community needs to be changed to meet today's needs or do you think it already meets today's needs?

	National Totals %	No Children In School %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %	High School Juniors & Seniors %
Needs to be changed	31	31	33	28	58
Already meets needs	46	36	59	57	41
No opinion	23	33	8	15	1
	100	100	100	100	100

Year-Around Schools

To utilize school buildings to the full extent, would you favor keeping the schools open the year around? Parents could chose which three of the four quarters of the year their children would attend. Do you approve or disapprove of this idea?

	National Totals %	No Children In School %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %	High School Juniors & Seniors %
Approve	42	44	39	36	40
Disapprove	49	45	56	57	58
No opinion	9	11	5	7	2
	100	100	100	100	100

Attitudes Toward Getting More Information About the Public Schools

Would you like to know more about the public schools in this community?

	National Totals %	No Children In School %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %	High School Juniors & Seniors %
Yes	54	48	62	54	51
No	44	50	36	41	48
Don't know/ no answer	2	2	2	5	1
	100	100	100	100	100

Same question, answers by other categories.

	For %	Against %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
Sex			
Men	49	49	2
Women	58	40	2
Race			
White	53	45	2
Nonwhite	66	31	3
Education			
Elementary grades	46	50	4
High school incomplete	53	44	3
High school complete	62	38	--
Technical, trade, or business school	54	45	1
College incomplete	58	40	2
College graduate	43	52	5

Occupation			
Business and professional	56	42	2
Clerical and sales	55	43	2
Farm	57	41	2
Skilled labor	51	47	2
Unskilled labor	62	36	2
Non-labor force	42	54	4
Age			
21 to 29 years	66	31	3
30 to 49 years	61	37	2
50 years and over	41	56	3
Religion			
Protestant	53	45	2
Roman Catholic	51	47	2
Jewish	73	25	2
All others	60	37	3
Region			
East	56	42	2
Midwest	49	49	2
South	59	37	4
West	48	51	1
Income			
$15,000 and over	45	51	4
$10,000 to $14,999	58	41	1
$ 7,000 to $ 9,999	59	40	1
$ 5,000 to $ 6,999	57	43	--
$ 4,000 to $ 4,999	46	52	2
$ 3,000 to $ 3,999	47	47	6
Under $2,999	46	49	5
Community size			
500,000 and over	55	43	2
50,000 to 499,999	53	46	1
25,000 to 49,999	56	44	--
Under 25,000	53	44	3

How would you appraise your ability to convey your thoughts in writing? read with speed and comprehension? speak correctly, fluently, effectively? develop new ideas, new solutions?

All Students

	Excellent %	Above Average %	Average %	Below Average %	Poor %
Convey your thoughts in writing	7	28	60	4	1

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Read with speed and comprehension	5	34	48	12	1
Speak correctly, fluently, effectively	7	28	57	8	--
Develop new ideas, new solutions	8	35	50	7	--

Would you say that your vocabulary is excellent, above average, average, below average, poor?

All students	4	26	62	8	--

Composition of the Sample

Analysis of Respondents

National Adults

No children in schools	56%
Public school parents	36%*
Parochial school parents	13%*

*Totals exceed 44% because some parents have children attending more than one kind of school.

High School Juniors and Seniors

Public school students	93%
Parochial school students	6%
Private school students	1%

	All Adults %	High School Juniors & Seniors %
Sex		
Men	48	49
Women	52	51
	100	100
Race		
White	91	89
Nonwhite	9	11
	100	100

	Second Annual Poll	
Religion		
Protestant	64	54
Roman Catholic	26	31
Jewish	3	3
Others	7	12
	100	100
Age		
21 to 29 years	20	
30 to 49 years	38	
50 years and over	42	
	100	
Under 15 years		4
16 years		24
17 years		49
18 years		20
19 years and over		3
		100
Occupation		
Business and professional	23	28
Clerical and sales	11	12
Farm	6	9
Skilled labor	19	22
Unskilled labor	20	19
Non-labor force	19	7
Undesignated	2	3
	100	100
Income		
$15,000 and over	13	13
$10,000 to $14,999	26	36
$ 7,000 to $ 9,999	19	16
$ 5,000 to $ 6,999	18	20
$ 4,000 to $ 4,999	6	5
$ 3,000 to $ 3,999	6	4
Under $2,999	11	3
Undesignated	1	3
	100	100
Region		
East	29	29
Midwest	29	30
South	26	26
West	16	15
	100	100
Community size		
500,000 and over	32	29
50,000 to 499,999	23	22

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25,000 to 49,999	2	3
Under 25,000	43	46
	100	100
Education		
Elementary grades	25	Does not apply
High school incomplete	16	
High school complete	30	
Technical, trade, or business school	5	
College incomplete	12	
College graduate	10	
Undesignated	2	
	100	

Chapter 4

Third Annual Gallup Poll of Public Attitudes Toward Education — 1971

Purpose of the Study

The survey reported here was sponsored by CFK Ltd. as part of an annual series designed to measure and to record the attitude of American citizens toward their public schools.

Each year new areas are covered, as new problems arise. Some questions are repeated from earlier years to measure trends.

The survey this year dealt at length with the problem of school finances, and particularly with possible economies that might be effected. This proved fortuitous, since the survey itself brings to light the fact that in the minds of the people finance is the biggest problem facing the public schools of the nation.

Research Procedure

The Sample. The sample embraced a total of 1,562 adults. It is described as a modified probability sample of the nation. Interviewing was conducted in every area of the country and in all types of communities. These communities, taken together, represent a true microcosm of the nation.

A separate survey was undertaken to learn the views of young men and women. This sample embraced 229 students who are presently enrolled in either the junior or senior class in high school.

The Interviewing Form. Questions included in the questionnaire were selected after many pretests conducted in the interviewing center maintained by the Gallup organizations in Hopewell, N.J.

Time of Interviewing. The field work for this study was conducted during the period of April 20 through 25, 1971.

Major Problems Confronting The Public Schools in 1971

The major problem facing the public schools in 1970 and in 1969, in the opinion of the American people, was discipline. In 1971, finance – how to pay for the schools – is cited most often as the biggest problem with which the local public schools must deal.

During the year, financial problems have grown with the rise in local property taxes in most areas, the increasing costs of education, and a lagging economy that has placed increased burdens on family pocketbooks.

Next in importance, in terms of number of mentions, is the problem of integration/segregation. It is in second place, as it was in 1970.

Difficulties arising out of school integration – busing and in-school troubles in getting whites and blacks to work together amicably – have been widespread enough to keep this problem in its number two position.

It is worth noting that high school juniors and seniors, and parents with children in the public schools, cite the problem of integration less often than do adults who have no children in school and who draw most of their conclusions from the press and television. This latter group believes integration to be the top problem.

Discipline has dropped from first place in 1970 and 1969 to third place in 1971 as a major problem. Undoubtedly the change in the attitude of students on college campuses during this year finds its parallel in the local schools. Also, as will be pointed out in the section on discipline, there is evidence that discipline has been tightened in the public schools, just as it has been in the colleges and universities.

The lack of school rooms and school facilities is considered to be the fourth major problem.

Drug taking is listed among the top five problems by adults; high school juniors and seniors cite it the most important problem.

The problem of "poor" teachers is cited often enough to place sixth in number of mentions. Lack of interest on the part of parents and pupils, the curriculum, the school administration are all mentioned as problems but not frequently enough to place them among the major concerns.

What's Right with the Public Schools?

When citizens are asked to give their views on the biggest problems facing the public schools, they obviously think of negative factors. To give them a chance to tell what is "right," this question was asked in this year's study:

> **In your own opinion, in what ways are your local *public* schools particularly good?**

The response most often given to this question is, "The teachers." The very high respect in which teachers are generally held throughout the nation is evidenced in many ways in this study.

The curriculum (courses offered) comes in for the next highest praise, followed by facilities and extracurricular activities.

Such a question provokes generalized comments; however, the answers do indicate a lack of information about the special merits of any school system.

Cutting School Costs

In the present state of the economy and the tight squeeze on the public's financial resources, the question of where school costs can be cut takes on added importance.

Because of the current interest in finding economies in school budgets, a major part of this year's study of the public's attitudes toward the public schools was devoted to discovering which proposals for reducing costs would meet with public approval and which would be opposed.

The problem of financing the schools can be approached from many points of view. In this study a total of 16 proposals for cost cutting were presented to those included in the survey. Also, questions were added to find out the public's reactions to performance contracts and to the use of management firms to look into school costs.

The proposals for reducing school costs were introduced with these words by the interviewer:

> **Suppose your local school board were "forced" to cut some things from school costs because there is not enough money. I am going to read you a list of many ways that have been suggested for reducing school costs. Will you tell me, in the case of each one, whether your opinion is favorable or unfavorable?**

The 16 proposals have been ranked in descending order on the basis of those which drew the most "unfavorable" responses:

	Unfavorable %	Favorable %	No Opinion %
1. Reduce special services such as speech, reading, and hearing therapy	80	10	10
2. Reduce the number of teachers by increasing class sizes	79	11	10
3. Cut all teachers' salaries by a set percentage	77	12	11
4. Reduce janitorial and maintenance services	72	15	13
5. Cut out kindergarten	69	19	12
6. Cut out after-school activities like bands, clubs, athletics, etc.	68	23	9
7. Keep present textbooks and library books although it may mean using outdated materials	68	20	12
8. Cut out the twelfth grade by covering in three years what is now covered in four	58	29	13

9. Reduce the amount of supplies and materials teachers use in classrooms	58	26	16
10. Reduce the number of subjects offered	57	30	13
11. Charge rent for all textbooks instead of providing them free	56	34	10
12. Make parents responsible for getting children to and from school	51	39	10
13. Reduce the number of counselors on the staff	49	32	19
14. Have the school run on a 12-month basis with three-month vacations for students, one-month vacations for teachers	38	47	15
15. Cancel any subjects that do not have the minimum number of students registered	35	52	13
16. Reduce number of administrative personnel	32	50	18

Readers of this report should be reminded that these suggestions for cost cutting by no means exhaust the list of places where economies could be made. It should be pointed out, also, that the responses do not apply to schools where there is no real need to make economies.

The findings reveal a strong reluctance to take drastic measures, or to alter in an important manner any of the current programs and practices.

As will be pointed out later, this does not mean that the public is unwilling to take a new look at school costs and to examine carefully the relationship between performance and costs.

As will be noted from the preceding table, the suggestion for cost cutting that wins the greatest support is the one that calls for a reduction in the number of administrative personnel. This reaction is undoubtedly a generalized one that springs from the belief that all institutions are subject to Parkinson's Law and acquire unneeded personnel unless halted.

Analysis of the views of the different groups included in the survey shows that persons who have no children in the public schools tend to look more favorably upon many of the suggested economies than do those with children in the schools. For example, those without children in the schools believe that parents should be made responsible for getting their children to and from school. They would also favor reducing the number of counselors on the staff.

This group, likewise, is much more favorable to putting schools on a 12-month basis, with students having three-month vacations and teachers one month. While the national finding on this suggestion shows more in favor than opposed, parents divide rather evenly: 47% approve, 46% oppose. In the survey conducted in 1970, a somewhat different plan – one that offered the choice of three of four quarters of the year – was voted down by a ratio of 49% to 42%.

It is still to be proved that the 12-month plan represents a real saving. If it does, then pressures will almost certainly mount to utilize school buildings and facilities the year-around.

The major groups included in this study, excepting only the students, favor canceling subjects that do not have the minimum number of students registered.

Performance Contracts

The public wants to be sure that it is getting its money's worth, whether it is a matter of buying shoes or paying taxes for the schools.

In many communities the people are perplexed as to why school costs rise so fast. In some cities they cannot understand why their children at the third- or fourth-grade level cannot read.

In the minds of the people, performance contracts apparently satisfy both of these situations. A fixed amount of money is paid, but only if the child meets a given standard.

To see how the public responds to the idea of performance contracts, this question was included on the interviewing form:

In some public schools, educational companies are

> **given contracts to put in new methods to teach the children in elementary schools certain basic skills, such as how to read. These are called "performance contracts." If the children don't reach a certain level of achievement, the company doesn't get paid for those children who fail to reach the standard. Would you like to have such contracts made here, in this community, if the overall school costs remain about the same?**

The number who favor the idea of performance contracts outnumbers the percentage opposed by the ratio of 49% to 28%, but a very sizable group, 23%, have yet to make up their minds about such a development.

Thus the burden of proof rests upon educators who oppose this idea. Unless cogent arguments can be advanced, unless experience proves that this is not an effective way of reaching educational goals at present cost levels, this movement is likely to gain momentum.

Management Experts

Further evidence that the public is not averse to having competent outsiders look into school costs is to be found in the results from another question bearing upon this matter. The question:

> **Would you favor or oppose the idea of having your school board hire management experts to look into the costs of local schools to see if the educational goals could be achieved at less cost?**

Again, the public votes in favor: 54% like this idea, 31% are opposed, and 15% have no opinion.

Strangely enough, parents of school children support this proposal by higher percentages than do those adults who have no children in the schools.

Accountability

Further evidence that the public wants to be sure that it is getting its money's worth for the tax dollars spent on public education and that the standards of the public schools are high comes from a third question. This one asked about national tests that permit one community's students to be compared with others of a similar kind. The question asked:

> **Would you like to see the students in the local schools be given national tests so that their educational achievement could be compared with students in other communities?**

The results: 70% favor, 21% oppose, 9% have no opinion. These findings are substantially the same as those found in last year's survey.

Many educators insist that educational achievement is difficult to measure, that communities vary to such an extent that comparisons are meaningless, and that a testing program puts undue pressures on both teachers and students to get high scores. But here again the burden of proof rests with those who oppose. The public wants some proof that their schools are good, that they are getting their money's worth. In the absence of other evidence, they will most certainly accept performance on national tests.

Voting Tax Increases

School bond issues have fared no better in 1971 than they did in 1970. The public is reluctant to vote for additional funds; in fact, a majority of all school bond issues throughout the nation have lost out at the voting booths. The percentage of issues voted upon favorably has changed little during the year; it is still in the low forties.

To gauge voter sentiment towards voting tax increases for the public schools, this question was framed:

> **Suppose the local *public* schools said they needed much more money. As you feel at this time, would you vote to raise taxes for this purpose, or would you vote against raising taxes for this purpose?**

When this same question was asked in the survey conducted last year, the results showed:

For raising taxes	37%
Against raising taxes	56%
No opinion	7%

When the same question was asked this year throughout the nation, the results were substantially the same:

For raising taxes	40%
Against raising taxes	52%
No opinion	8%

The pattern of those who vote favorably on tax increases for the public schools and those who vote against remains constant.

Those who are most inclined to approve tax increases are the better educated, the younger age groups, business and professional people.

The greatest opposition comes from the poorly educated, persons over 50 years of age, low-income groups, and manual laborers.

Another breakdown of the statistical data reveals the attitudes of those with and without children in the schools. In the 1970 survey, these groups voted as follows:

1970

	For Tax Increases %	Against Tax Increases %	No Opinion %
Public school parents	43	53	4
Parochial/private school parents	37	58	5
No children in schools	35	57	8

In 1971 the vote is as follows:

1971

Public school parents	44	49	7
Parochial/private school parents	37	59	4
No children in schools	37	53	10

The pattern again remains constant. Understandably, parents with children in the public schools are more favorably inclined toward tax increases to support the public schools than those who have no children, or those who have children in parochial or private schools.

The heavy tax burden placed upon local property to support the public schools has brought the demand in many areas that the state government assume a greater share of these costs.

To see whether the public would prefer a shift to higher state taxes in return for lower real estate taxes, this question was asked:

> **It has been suggested that state taxes be increased for everyone in order to let the state government pay a greater share of school expense and to reduce local property taxes. Would you favor an increase in state taxes so that real estate taxes could be lowered on local property?**

More persons favor than disapprove this shift, but the margin has declined during the last year. In 1970 the ratio of those in favor to those against was 54% to 34%; in 1971 the ratio is 46% to 37%.

The Voucher System

Most state governments have had to increase taxes for other purposes. The suggestion that these state taxes be increased still further – even as an offset to real estate taxes – apparently meets with little enthusiasm.

The voucher system for allocating public funds to parochial and private schools has been widely debated during the last year. However, this discussion, as measured by the percentage of persons for and against the voucher system, has not changed attitudes to any great extent. The public was opposed to the voucher plan by a small majority in 1970. The same situation obtains in 1971.

The voucher plan was explained to those interviewed in these words in 1970:

> **In some nations, the government allots a certain**

amount of money for each child for his education. The parents can then send the child to any public, parochial, or private school they choose. Would you like to see such an idea adopted in this country?

In 1971 one sentence was added: *"This is called the voucher system."* This sentence, it was felt, would make it clear to the person being interviewed that we were discussing the voucher system.

The national results show about the same division of opinion:

	Favor %	Oppose %	Don't Know %
1970	43	46	11
1971	38	44	18

It can be seen that the ratio of those opposed to those who favor the voucher system shows little change; the percentage of "undecideds" has gone up markedly.

Moreover, the percentage of parochial and private school parents who favor the plan has also shown a marked increase. The plan is so obviously favorable to this group that its increase in popularity is not unexpected.

Fund Raising in the School

In low-income communities the question arises as to whether school children should be asked to bring money to school to pay for a host of things, apart from school lunches. To save embarrassment for the children of the poor, to increase equality of opportunity, and to minimize dropouts, should not the school itself pay these costs, instead of the child?

Most parents, 59% of those with children in the public schools, say their children must bring money from home to pay for supplies and activities and similar items. In the case of high school juniors and seniors, 76% claim they must bring money to pay for such things as books, insurance, field trips, school pictures, class dues, locker fees, school newspapers and yearbooks, athletic equipment, and the like.

When asked whether the pupil or the school should pay for such things, the majority say such fees should continue to be paid for by the student, not the school.

The vote is 4 to 1 in favor of continuing the present practice.

Another aspect of this same problem has to do with fund-raising events held by teachers and students to pay for special projects such as after-school activities, school equipment, and the like. There is little opposition to these fund-raising affairs. In fact, the vote in favor is an overwhelming 84%.

The approval vote for this type of fund raising is so high that it leads to the suggestion that the schools of the nation not only should permit, but actively encourage, this method of raising money for school activities. Yet professional educators find many drawbacks to certain fund-raising activities of this sort, often with good logic.

Parent Accountability

Much discussion in educational circles has centered about teacher and school accountability. In the survey this year, for the first time, the matter of *parent* accountability was explored – with results so significant that a change in focus of the present debate is indicated.

The question that was designed to gather the views of the public on this matter of parent accountability, as opposed to teacher, school, and pupil accountability, was stated as follows:

> **When some children do poorly in school, some people place the blame on the children, some on the children's home life, some on the school, and some on the teachers. Of course, all of these things share the blame, but where would you place the *chief* blame?**

The answer given by the greatest percentage of those interviewed: the children's home life. In fact, more than half of the adults interviewed (54%) give this answer. Only 14% name children, 8% teachers, and 6% the schools.

It is significant that parents with children now in the public schools name the child's home life as the chief cause of a student's failure in school; they do not, as might be expected, shift the responsibility to the teachers or to the school or to the children.

It is equally interesting that high school juniors and seniors do not absolve themselves from blame for doing poorly. When the same question was put to them, they said the student, himself, is to blame. Approximately one-half (51%) blame the children, 25% say "home life," only 11% blame the teachers, and only 5% the school.

To explore further the matter of parental accountability, the following question was included:

> **A suggestion has been made that parents of school children attend one evening class a month to find out what they can do at home to improve their children's behavior and increase their interest in school work. Is it a good idea or a poor idea?**

Eight in 10 (81%) of all adults questioned thought this was a good idea. Most important, virtually this same ratio (80%) of the parents of school children said it was a good idea.

This very impressive percentage reveals a growing recognition of the role of parents in the educational process, and of the need for a new kind of partnership between teachers and parents.

Since an important part of the whole educational process must necessarily be carried on in the home, it is obvious that parents must be better trained to carry out their responsibilities.

Until this point in history, the schools have had to shoulder the burden – teaching discipline and how to get along with others, developing proper work habits, providing motivation, and doing a dozen other things – all in addition to teaching the basic school subjects and skills.

Other surveys have shown how important home training and motivation are in determining a child's success in school – in fact, in determining how far he is likely to go in his education.

Preparing parents to carry out their educational responsibilities is just as important as training teachers for their work. How best to do this must await the results of

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experiments planned in this new field of educational training.

What is of utmost importance is that parents themselves see the need for this kind of training. They are willing to devote time to learn how to do a better job of motivating their children, improving their behavior, and covering those areas of education not included in the school curriculum.

Discipline

Because of the great concern on the part of the public about discipline in the public schools, an effort was made in the 1971 survey to probe more deeply into this problem with the hope of shedding more light on the views of parents and other groups.

This year, as last, those interviewed express their belief that discipline is "not strict enough." There has been a slight decrease in the number who hold this opinion during the last year, and, as pointed out earlier, the problem of discipline has been superseded by finance as the number one worry about the public schools; yet there has been only a slight change in views recorded.

Here is a comparison of the findings for the two years – 1970 and 1971.

	1970 %	1971 %
Discipline is too strict	2	3
Discipline is not strict enough	53	48
Discipline is about right	31	33
Don't know/no opinion	14	16

The matter of discipline has not commanded the front-page space it did a year ago, nor as much television or radio time. Some evidence that the schools may be imposing stricter discipline comes from the interviews with high school juniors and seniors – who would be immediately concerned.

When they were asked a year ago whether they thought discipline was "too strict" or "not strict enough," 15% said it was "too strict," 23% said it was "not strict enough," and the remainder said it was "about right." This year almost exactly the same number say discipline is "too strict" as say it is "not strict enough" – 22% to 23%.

Since discipline means different things to different people, a question was asked this year of those who replied that discipline is "not strict enough." If they gave this response they were then asked:

Can you tell me what you mean? In what way is discipline not strict enough?

Those who said that discipline was not strict enough gave answers that have been categorized as follows:

Teachers lack authority to keep order	11%
Students have too much freedom; they can get away with anything	11%
Students have no respect for their teachers; pay no attention to them	6%
Rules are not enforced	3%
Vandalism	2%
Other responses and no opinion	11%

The problem of discipline has two sides. One concerns the enforcement of rules; the other, avoiding the need to enforce rules.

The public, judging from their responses, is strongly of the opinion that "if the schools and the teachers interest the children in learning, most disciplinary problems disappear."

Every group interviewed, and by substantial majorities, agrees that the need for discipline tends to disappear when students become genuinely interested in learning.

Further evidence on this point comes from the findings on another question included in the survey. This one dealt with problem children and what should be done about them. The question was worded in this fashion:

Some students are not interested in school. Often they keep other students from working in school. What should be done in these cases?

Answers fall into two broad categories: "use punitive measures" (expel them, use harsher discipline, put them into a school for problem students) and "try remedial measures" (special classes, a more interesting curriculum, vocational training, etc.).

Those who fall into this latter category outnumber those who believe in punitive measures by a 2-to-1 ratio.

Racial Integration in the Schools

The 1954 Supreme Court decision dealing with racial integration in the schools was based largely upon the assumption that black students, segregated in their own schools, were being deprived of the higher quality of education offered whites. Some 17 years have passed since that time and integration* is far from complete.

In fact, problems arising out of school integration are cited, in this survey, as the nation's greatest public school problem, next to finance.

Some individuals doubt that integrated education is actually improving the quality of education received by the blacks, or whether it is improving the quality of education received by the whites; and whether integration actually is improving relations between the races.

To see how the public would respond to questions dealing with these aspects of school integration, the following questions were included in the present survey:

> **1. Do you feel it (school integration) has improved the quality of education received by black students?**
>
> **2. Do you feel it (school integration) has improved the quality of education received by white students?**
>
> **3. Do you feel it (school integration) has improved relations between blacks and whites or has it worked against better relations?**

The national consensus, judged by survey results, is that integration has improved the quality of education received by the blacks, that is has not improved the quality of education received by white students, but that, on the whole, it has improved relations between blacks and whites.

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*Not distinguished in this report from desegregation.

Parents of children now enrolled in the public schools say, by a ratio of 44% to 35%, that relations have been improved; parents of children in parochial and private schools, by a ratio of 49% to 39%, believe that relations have improved. And perhaps of greatest significance, high school juniors and seniors are even more of the opinion that integration has improved relations. They hold 59% to 28% that relations have improved.

Educational Innovation

The American people are almost evenly divided on the question of whether too many or not enough educational changes are being tried in the public schools.

The question asked in the survey taps generalized attitudes and, as will be pointed out later, does not apply to specific innovations contemplated. These must be considered on their own merits.

What the question does probe is the overall feeling of the public about the extent to which the schools are keeping up with the times.

In the survey of last year, this question was asked:

> **Do you feel that the local public schools are not interested enough in trying new ways and methods, or are they too ready to try new ideas?**

The same attitude was probed this year from a slightly different direction, one dealing more with behavior. The question this year reads:

> **In the schools in your community, do you think too many educational changes are being tried, or not enough?**

No matter which way attitudes are measured, the answers come back almost exactly the same, as the following findings reveal.

1970

Do you feel that the local public schools are not interested enough in trying new ways and methods or are they too ready to try new ideas?

Not interested enough	20%
Too ready to try new ideas	21%
Just about right	32%
Don't know	27%

1971

In the schools in your community, do you think too many educational changes are being tried, or not enough?

Too many being tried	22%
Not enough	24%
Just about right	32%
Don't know	22%

Students do not agree with their elders on this matter. In both surveys, they vote heavily on the side that not enough innovations are being tried, that not enough interest is being displayed in trying new methods. In fact, they hold this belief by a ratio of 3 to 1.

As noted earlier, the reaction of those interviewed was to the generalized issue of change, not to specific innovations proposed.

For example:

By a very large majority all the major groups surveyed hold the opinion that not enough attention is being given to students who do not plan to go on to college.

Nationally, the findings show that 68% agree with those who believe "that too much emphasis is placed in the high schools on preparing students for college and not enough emphasis on preparing students for occupations that do not require a college degree." In contrast to the 68% who hold this view, only 23% hold the opposite view.

Another case in point concerns the amount of time spent in classrooms as opposed to the time spent in independent study. A plurality of the adults included in the survey believe the local schools should give more time for independent study, the ratio being 31% in favor to 22% opposed.

The junior and senior high school students questioned are strongly of the opinion that more time should be spent in independent study, relatively less in the classroom. Their vote is 56% in favor to 18% opposed.

The Major Problems

What do you think are the biggest problems with which the *public* schools in this community must deal?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %	High School Juniors & Seniors %
Finances	23	22	24	21	9
Integration/segregation	21	26	16	14	17
Discipline	14	13	14	23	14
Facilities	13	10	17	20	18
Dope/drugs	12	11	13	9	19
Teachers' lack of interest/ability	5	4	5	12	7
Teachers (general)	6	4	8	5	5
Parents' lack of interest	4	3	5	5	*
School administration	3	3	3	7	3
Curriculum	3	3	2	5	5
Pupils' lack of interest	2	2	2	--	3
Vandalism	2	2	2	*	6
Disrespect for teachers	2	2	1	*	1
School board policies	1	*	2	*	1
Using new up-to-date methods	1	*	2	*	*
We have no problems	4	3	6	*	3
Miscellaneous	6	6	5	9	14
Don't know/no answer	12	16	8	10	2

*Less than 1%

In your own opinion, in what ways are your local *public* schools particularly good?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %	High School Juniors & Seniors %
Teachers	21	17	27	22	27

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Curriculum	15	10	22	18	28
Facilities	9	6	13	13	10
Up-to-date teaching methods	5	4	7	3	1
Extracurricular activities	3	2	5	5	14
No racial conflicts	3	3	4	3	3
Small school/classes	2	2	3	2	3
Good administration	2	2	3	3	*
Good student-teacher relationships	2	1	3	*	4
Parents are interested/participate	2	*	3	4	--
Discipline	1	1	1	*	2
Transportation system	1	*	2	--	*
Equal opportunity for all	1	1	1	4	*
Nothing good	7	7	7	13	8
Miscellaneous	4	4	8	2	10
Don't know/no answer	27	38	12	23	10

*Less than 1%

Cutting School Costs

Suppose your local school board were "forced" to cut some things from school costs because there is not enough money. I am going to read you a list of many ways that have been suggested for reducing school costs. Will you tell me, in the case of each one, whether your opinion is favorable or unfavorable.

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %	High School Juniors & Seniors %
Reduce the number of teachers by increasing class sizes.					
Favorable	11	12	9	14	8
Unfavorable	79	72	88	86	91
No opinion	10	16	3	–	1
	100	100	100	100	100

Cut all teachers' salaries by a set percentage.

Favorable	12	13	11	14	15
Unfavorable	77	70	85	84	80
No opinion	11	17	4	2	5
	100	100	100	100	100

Cut out after-school activities like bands, clubs, athletics, etc.

Favorable	23	22	23	31	8
Unfavorable	68	64	74	68	89
No opinion	9	14	3	1	3
	100	100	100	100	100

Have the schools run on a 12-month basis with three-month vacations for students, one month for teachers.

Favorable	47	45	47	57	37
Unfavorable	38	33	46	34	58
No opinion	15	22	7	9	5
	100	100	100	100	100

Make parents responsible for getting children to and from school.

Favorable	39	41	36	48	27
Unfavorable	51	43	62	51	68
No opinion	10	16	2	1	5
	100	100	100	100	100

Cut out kindergarten.

Favorable	19	18	21	23	24
Unfavorable	69	64	75	72	71
No opinion	12	18	4	5	5
	100	100	100	100	100

Charge rent for all textbooks instead of providing them free.

Favorable	34	33	33	47	33
Unfavorable	56	52	63	51	65
No opinion	10	15	4	2	2
	100	100	100	100	100

Cut out the twelfth grade by covering in three years what is now covered in four.

Favorable	29	31	26	28	45
Unfavorable	58	51	69	65	53
No opinion	13	18	5	7	2
	100	100	100	100	100

Cancel any subjects that do not have the minimum number of students registered.

Favorable	52	51	52	60	53
Unfavorable	35	31	42	35	45
No opinion	13	18	6	5	2
	100	100	100	100	100

Reduce the number of subjects offered.

Favorable	30	30	29	32	17
Unfavorable	57	50	68	65	82
No opinion	13	20	3	3	1
	100	100	100	100	100

Reduce janitorial and maintenance services.

Favorable	15	15	14	16	19
Unfavorable	72	67	80	78	77
No opinion	13	18	6	6	4
	100	100	100	100	100

Keep present textbooks and library books although it may mean using outdated materials.

Favorable	20	20	20	14	16
Unfavorable	68	63	76	82	81
No opinion	12	17	4	4	3
	100	100	100	100	100

Reduce the amount of supplies and materials teachers use in classrooms.

Favorable	26	27	22	31	26
Unfavorable	58	51	70	60	73
No opinion	16	22	8	9	1
	100	100	100	100	100

Reduce the number of counselors on the staff.

Favorable	32	31	33	40	28
Unfavorable	49	42	58	49	70
No opinion	19	27	9	11	2
	100	100	100	100	100

Reduce special services, such as speech, reading, and hearing therapy.

Favorable	10	10	9	9	13
Unfavorable	80	74	89	89	84
No opinion	10	16	2	2	3
	100	100	100	100	100

Reduce the number of administrative personnel.

Favorable	50	48	50	55	43
Unfavorable	32	27	41	32	52
No opinion	18	25	9	13	5
	100	100	100	100	100

In some public schools, educational companies are given contracts to put in new methods to teach the children in elementary schools certain basic skills, such as how to read. These are called "performance contracts." If the children don't reach a certain level of achievement, the company doesn't get paid for those children who fail to reach the standard. Would you like to have such contracts made here, in this community, if the overall school costs remain about the same?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %	High School Juniors & Seniors %
Yes	49	44	55	58	57
No	28	25	33	24	33
No opinion	23	31	12	18	10
	100	100	100	100	100

Would you favor or oppose the idea of having your school board hire management experts to look into the costs of local schools to see if the educational goals could be achieved at less cost?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %	High School Juniors & Seniors %
Favor	54	49	61	67	69
Oppose	31	30	33	24	23
Don't know	15	21	6	9	8
	100	100	100	100	100

Would you like to see the students in the local schools be given national tests so that

their educational achievement could be compared with students in other communities?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %	High School Juniors & Seniors %
Yes	70	69	72	70	66
No	21	20	22	24	31
No opinion	9	11	6	6	3
	100	100	100	100	100

The Voucher System

In some nations, the government allots a certain amount of money for each child for his education. The parents can then send the child to any public, parochial, or private school they choose. This is called the "voucher system." Would you like to see such an idea adopted in this country?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %	High School Juniors & Seniors %
Favor	38	34	39	66	58
Oppose	44	40	51	31	35
No opinion	18	26	10	3	7
	100	100	100	100	100

Voting Tax Increases

Suppose the local *public* schools said they needed much more money. As you feel at this time, would you vote to raise taxes for this purpose, or would you vote against raising taxes for this purpose?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %	High School Juniors & Seniors %
For	40	37	44	37	45

Against	52	53	49	59	49
No opinion	8	10	7	4	6
	100	100	100	100	100

Same question, answers by different categories.

	For %	Against %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
Sex			
Men	40	53	7
Women	39	52	9
Race			
White	40	53	7
Nonwhite	38	49	13
Education			
Elementary grades	27	62	11
High school incomplete	32	60	8
High school complete	37	55	8
Technical, trade, or business school	42	49	9
College incomplete	48	46	6
College graduate	58	35	7
Occupation			
Business and professional	52	41	7
Clerical and sales	48	48	4
Farm	34	56	10
Skilled labor	38	54	8
Unskilled labor	35	59	6
Non-labor force	27	60	13
Age			
21 to 29 years	53	40	7
30 to 49 years	43	52	5
50 years and over	31	58	11
Religion			
Protestant	41	51	8
Roman Catholic	34	57	9
Jewish	50	39	11
All others	42	47	11
Region			
East	34	58	8
Midwest	40	52	8
South	41	50	9
West	46	46	8
Community size			
500,000 and over	39	51	10
50,000 to 499,999	38	52	10

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25,000 to 49,999	57	38	7
Under 25,000	40	55	5
Income			
$15,000 and over	51	42	7
$10,000 to $14,999	41	51	8
$ 7,000 to $ 9,999	42	55	3
$ 5,000 to $ 6,999	38	52	10
$ 3,000 to $ 4,999	36	55	9
Under $3,000	24	60	16

It has been suggested that state taxes be increased for everyone in order to let the state government pay a greater share of school expense and to reduce local property taxes. Would you favor an increase in state taxes so that real estate taxes could be lowered on local property?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %	High School Juniors & Seniors %
For	46	43	50	46	50
Against	37	36	38	46	31
No opinion	17	21	12	8	19
	100	100	100	100	100

Fund Raising in the Public Schools

Does your child bring money from home to pay for anything, except lunch, in school? [Asked only of parents of school children]

	National Totals %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %	High School Juniors & Seniors %
Yes	59	60	56	76
No	39	38	37	24
Don't know	2	2	7	--
	100	100	100	100

If *"yes,"* for what?

Books	9	19	27	30

Supplies for classes (general)	7	17	17	24
Travel expenses for field trips	5	11	11	7
Athletic fees/equipment	3	6	6	11
School newspaper/school-related newspaper	3	7	2	7
Fees for special programs	3	8	5	4
Club dues/class dues	2	5	3	16
Parties/dances	2	4	3	2
Charitable contributions/ events	2	3	6	3
General school activities	1	3	4	5
Miscellaneous	9	20	12	26

Do you think such fees should be charged?

	National Totals %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %	High School Juniors & Seniors %
Yes	47	47	46	56
No	10	11	10	17
No opinion	2	2	--	3
	59	60	56	76

In some schools, teachers and students have fund-raising events to finance special projects for school equipment, after-school activities, and the like. Do you think it is a good idea or a poor idea for the schools to permit these events?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %	High School Juniors & Seniors %
Good idea	84	81	88	90	97
Poor idea	11	12	10	8	3
No opinion	5	7	2	2	--
	100	100	100	100	100

Parent Accountability

When some children do poorly in school, some people place the blame on the children, some on the children's home life, some on the

school, and some on the teachers. Of course, all of these things share the blame, but where would you place the *chief* blame?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %	High School Juniors & Seniors %
Children	14	11	17	14	51
Home life	54	58	49	44	25
School	6	6	6	14	5
Teachers	8	7	10	8	11
No opinion	18	18	18	20	8
	100	100	100	100	100

A suggestion has been made that parents of school children attend one evening class a month to find out what they can do at home to improve their children's behavior and increase their interest in school work. Is it a good idea or a poor idea?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %	High School Juniors & Seniors %
Good idea	81	82	80	81	75
Poor idea	13	11	16	15	21
No opinion	6	7	4	4	4
	100	100	100	100	100

Discipline

How do you feel about the discipline in the local public schools – is it too strict, not strict enough, or just about right?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %	High School Juniors & Seniors %
Too strict	3	3	3	--	22
Not strict enough	48	47	47	58	23
Just about right	33	26	46	29	53

Don't know	16	24	4	13	2
	100	100	100	100	100

If *"not strict enough"*: Can you tell me what you mean? In what ways is discipline not strict enough?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %	High School Juniors & Seniors %
Teachers lack authority	11	10	12	14	2
Students have too much freedom	11	11	12	15	7
Disrespect for teachers	6	7	4	8	4
Rules are not enforced	3	4	2	3	4
Dress code is too liberal	3	2	3	4	*
Vandalism	2	2	2	5	*
Parents not interested in school affairs	2	1	3	5	*
Miscellaneous	3	3	3	5	*
Don't know/ no answer	3	3	4	2	*

*Less than 1%

Some students are not interested in school. Often they keep other students from working in school. What should be done in these cases?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %	High School Juniors & Seniors %
Special classes for all who are not interested	29	26	34	27	27
Expel them	12	12	12	13	22
Offer better/ more interesting: curriculum/teaching methods	11	11	10	13	14

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Special counseling	9	9	10	11	13
Harsher discipline	9	9	10	7	4
Vocational training	8	8	7	9	8
Make their parents responsible	7	6	7	8	3
Put in school for problem students	6	5	7	13	3
Teachers should take more interest in such students	4	3	5	3	4
Miscellaneous	5	5	5	4	5
Don't know/ no answer	18	21	16	14	14

Some people say that if the schools and the teachers interest the children in learning, most disciplinary problems disappear. Do you agree or disagree?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %	High School Juniors & Seniors %
Agree	76	75	76	78	81
Disagree	18	17	20	20	18
No opinion	6	8	4	2	1
	100	100	100	100	100

Racial Integration in the Schools

How do you feel about school integration?

Do you feel it has improved the quality of education received by black students?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %	High School Juniors & Seniors %
Yes	43	39	48	51	56
No	31	31	31	33	31

Don't know	26	30	21	16	13
	100	100	100	100	100

Do you feel it has improved the quality of education received by white students?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %	High School Juniors & Seniors %
Yes	23	21	26	30	35
No	51	48	54	53	47
Don't know	26	31	20	17	18
	100	100	100	100	100

Do you feel it has improved relations between blacks and whites or has it worked against better relations?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %	High School Juniors & Seniors %
Improved relations	40	36	44	49	59
Worked against	35	35	35	39	28
No opinion	25	29	21	12	13
	100	100	100	100	100

Same question, answers by different categories.

	Improved Relations %	Worked Against %	No Opinion %
Sex			
Men	40	37	23
Women	40	33	27
Race			
White	37	37	26
Nonwhite	63	15	22
Education			
Elementary grades	26	43	31
High school incomplete	36	37	27
High school complete	37	38	25
Technical, trade, or business school	41	34	25

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College incomplete	49	32	19
College graduate	51	29	20
Occupation			
Business and professional	49	28	23
Clerical and sales	44	31	25
Farm	29	37	34
Skilled labor	40	39	21
Unskilled labor	40	34	26
Non-labor force	29	40	31
Age			
21 to 29 years	50	31	19
30 to 49 years	42	36	22
50 years and over	33	36	31
Religion			
Protestant	39	37	24
Roman Catholic	39	33	28
Jewish	48	35	17
All others	48	22	30
Region			
East	37	34	29
Midwest	40	36	24
South	41	39	20
West	42	29	29
Income			
$15,000 and over	44	35	21
$10,000 to $14,999	41	35	24
$ 7,000 to $ 9,999	40	37	23
$ 5,000 to $ 6,999	42	33	25
$ 3,000 to $ 4,999	38	37	25
Under $3,000	31	35	34
Community size			
500,000 and over	41	37	22
50,000 to 499,999	43	33	24
25,000 to 49,999	32	61	7
Under 25,000	37	34	29

Educational Innovation

In the schools in your community, do you think too many educational changes are being tried, or not enough?

	National Totals	No Children In Schools	Public School Parents	Parochial School Parents	High School Juniors & Seniors
	%	%	%	%	%
Too many	22	21	23	24	14
Not enough	24	23	26	33	53
About right	32	24	44	28	31
Don't know	22	32	7	15	2
	100	100	100	100	100

In some schools, time spent by students in classrooms is being reduced to give more time for independent study, that is, carrying out learning projects on their own. Should the local schools give more time to independent study than they presently do, or should they give less time?

	National Totals	No Children In Schools	Public School Parents	Parochial School Parents	High School Juniors & Seniors
	%	%	%	%	%
More	31	30	31	39	56
Less	22	18	26	28	18
About right now	25	21	32	25	20
No opinion	22	31	11	8	6
	100	100	100	100	100

Some people feel that too much emphasis is placed in the high schools on preparing students for college and not enough emphasis on preparing students for occupations that do not require a college degree. Do you agree or disagree?

	National Totals	No Children In Schools	Public School Parents	Parochial School Parents	High School Juniors & Seniors
	%	%	%	%	%
Agree	68	68	69	67	61
Disagree	23	21	25	27	35
No opinion	9	11	6	6	4
	100	100	100	100	100

Analysis of Respondents

Adults

No children in school	56%
Public school parents	39%*
Parochial school parents	8%*

*Totals exceed 44% because some parents have children attending more than one kind of school.

High school juniors and seniors

Public school students	90%
Parochial and private school students	10%

	All Adults %	High School Juniors & Seniors %
Sex		
Men	48	52
Women	52	48
	100	100
Race		
White	91	90
Nonwhite	9	10
	100	100
Religion		
Protestant	64	53
Roman Catholic	26	33
Jewish	3	4
Others	7	10
	100	100
Age		
21 to 29 years	20	
30 to 49 years	38	
50 years and over	42	
	100	
15 years and under		10
16 years		30
17 years		42
18 years and over		18
		100
Region		
East	29	31
Midwest	28	30

		Third Annual Poll
South	26	25
West	17	14
	100	100
Community size		
500,000 and over	32	32
50,000 to 499,999	24	23
25,000 to 49,999	3	3
Under 25,000	41	42
	100	100
Education		
Elementary grades	16	Does not apply
High school incomplete	19	
High school complete	31	
Technical, trade, or business school	7	
College incomplete	13	
College graduate	14	
	100	
Occupation		
Business and professional	24	29
Clerical and sales	11	13
Farm	5	6
Skilled labor	18	23
Unskilled labor	21	21
Non-labor force	19	4
Undesignated	2	4
	100	100
Income		
$15,000 and over	17	18
$10,000 to $14,999	26	32
$ 7,000 to $ 9,999	18	14
$ 5,000 to $ 6,999	15	15
$ 4,000 to $ 4,999	5	4
$ 3,000 to $ 3,999	5	5
Under $2,999	12	4
Undesignated	2	8
	100	100

Chapter 5

Fourth Annual Gallup Poll of Public Attitudes Toward Education — 1972

Purpose of the Study

The survey reported in the following pages was sponsored by CFK Ltd. and is the fourth in an annual series designed to measure and record the attitude of American citizens toward their public schools.

Each year new areas are covered as new problems become salient. Some questions are repeated from earlier years in order to measure trends.

The survey this year emphasized various ways of providing funds for the operation of public schools in the United States. Other issues which provoke discussion in the educational world were included: the goals of education, accountability, compulsory attendance, teacher tenure, alternative ways for students to learn, the public's attitudes towards school boards and teachers.

The findings of this study apply to the nation as a whole and not necessarily to any single community. These findings do, however, permit local communities to compare results of surveys conducted within their own community with the results of the national survey.

The study represents the joint planning of the staff of CFK Ltd. and the staff of Gallup International. Valuable help in selection of the areas of interest and concern to be included in the survey came from: Forbes Bottomly, superintendent of schools, Seattle, Wash.; B. Frank Brown, director, Information and Services Division, Institute for

Development of Educational Activities (I/D/E/A), Melbourne, Fla., and member, CFK Ltd. Board of Directors; Stanley Elam, editor, *Phi Delta Kappan*, Bloomington, Ind.; Ernest Jones, acting superintendent of schools, St. Louis, Mo.; Carl L. Marburger, state commissioner of education, Trenton, N.J.; and Kenneth Schoonover, superintendent, Arapahoe County School District Six, Littleton, Colo.

Research Procedure

The Sample. The sample embraced a total of 1,614 adults. It is described as a modified probability sample of the nation. Interviewing was conducted in every area of the country and in all types of communities. These communities, taken together, represent a true microcosm of the nation. A full description of the adult sample will be found at the end of this report.

A separate survey was undertaken to learn the views of professional educators. This sample embraced 270 educators (teachers, assistant principals, principals, administrators, superintendents). These persons also were interviewed in every area of the country and in all types of communities.

The Interviewing Form. Questions included in the questionnaire were selected after many pretests conducted in the interviewing center maintained by the Gallup organizations in Hopewell, New Jersey.

Time of Interviewing. The field work for this study was done from April 21 through 23, 1972.

Major Problems Confronting The Public Schools in 1972

Discipline again ranks as the number one problem of the public schools, in the minds of the citizens of the nation. For one brief year, 1971, it dropped to third place in the list. This year discipline is restored to the top position held in earlier years.

Based upon the number of mentions to the open question, "What do you think are the biggest problems with which the *public* schools in this community must deal?," the top problems are as follows:

1. Lack of discipline
2. Lack of proper financial support
3. Integration-segregation problems
4. Difficulty of getting "good" teachers
5. Large school, too large classes
6. Parents' lack of interest
7. Lack of proper facilities
8. Poor curriculum
9. Use of dope, drugs

Since last year the number of times the use of dope and drugs was mentioned as a serious problem of the schools has dropped significantly – from fifth place in 1971 to ninth place in 1972.

The professional educators interviewed in this same survey regard school finances as the number one problem, followed in order by integration/segregation, discipline, parents' lack of interest, quality of teaching, curriculum, use of dope and drugs, and lack of proper school facilities.

The public's desire for stricter school policies bearing on discipline has been manifested in many ways in the years since these annual CFK Ltd. surveys were established. The present survey adds further evidence.

The question of "student rights" was probed in the present survey. The question:

Generally speaking, do the local public school students in this community have too many rights and privileges, or not enough?

The general public replied:

Too many	41%
Not enough	11%
Just right	33%
No opinion	15%

Since 18-year-olds now have the right to vote, the question has arisen as to whether, as full-fledged citizens, they should not have more rights than other students. The public says "no" in resounding fashion. The question:

Should students who are 18 years of age, and now have the right to vote, have more rights and privileges than other students?

Yes	21%
No	73%
No opinion	6%

It is worth noting again that in the 1971 survey the public agreed, by a substantial majority, that while discipline is a major concern, "if the schools and teachers interest the children in learning, most disciplinary problems disappear."

In What Ways Are the Local Public Schools Particularly Good?

Relatively few citizens ever stop to think about the good things the public schools are doing. It is much easier to complain. To find out just what the typical citizen thinks his own schools are "doing right," this question has been included in all CFK Ltd. surveys:

In your own opinion, in what ways are your local *public* schools particularly good?

The responses, in order of mention, follow:

1. The curriculum
2. The teachers
3. School facilities
4. Equal opportunity for all
5. No racial conflicts
6. Extracurricular activities
7. Up-to-date teaching methods
8. Good student-teacher relationships
9. Good administration
10. Small school or small classes

Because of the absence of objective data by which to judge local schools, responses are almost never stated in terms of achievement, of success in reaching educational goals, or the product itself – the graduates.

Even professional educators are unlikely to judge the schools by results. When they were asked this same question, they named, in order: curriculum, teachers, equal opportunity for all students, school facilities, up-to-date teaching methods, no racial conflicts, good student-teacher relationships, extracurricular activities, good administration, small school or small classes.

The Goals of Education As the Public Sees Them

Most efforts to discover the public's ideas on the goals of education have ended in questionable findings because researchers have failed to distinguish between ends and means.

To avoid this, the present survey has attempted to make a separation, dealing with ends first and with means later.

An open question (with two probes) was utilized to get at the public's ideas of the ultimate goals of education. This was the question asked:

> **People have different reasons why they want their children to get an education. What are the chief reasons that come to your mind?**

After the person interviewed had answered this question, he was asked if he could think of anything else. One further attempt was made to see if he could add to his list.

Here are the responses and the percentages of respondents mentioning each in some form:

1.	To get better jobs	44%
2.	To get along better with people at all levels of society	43%
3.	To make more money – achieve financial success	38%
4.	To attain self-satisfaction	21%
5.	To stimulate their minds	15%
6.	Miscellaneous reasons	11%

These responses show that the public thinks of education largely in a pragmatic way. But this heavy emphasis on material goals, at the expense of those concerned with intellectual and artistic development, should come as no shock. Americans are a practical people who believe firmly that education is the royal road to success in life.

Is there a wide chasm between the educational programs followed in the public schools and the programs to which the public attaches great importance? Some will view these tabulations as evidence that there is. Yet we have already seen that the public does not regard curricular problems as particularly serious. In fact curriculum ranked at the top in our tabulation of school strengths.

After having sought to learn the public's views on the ultimate goals of education, our interviewers handed each respondent a card on which were listed nine specific programs for reaching educational goals.

Respondents were asked first about elementary school children.

Below are ratings of these programs based upon the number of mentions. The question was:

> **Which three of these educational programs [card list] would you like your local elementary schools (grades 1-6) to give *more attention* to:**

1. Teaching students the skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic
2. Teaching students how to solve problems and think for themselves
3. Teaching students to respect law and authority
4. Teaching students how to get along with others
5. Teaching students the skills of speaking and listening
6. Teaching students vocational skills
7. Teaching students health and physical education
8. Teaching students about the world of today and yesterday (that is, history, geography, and civics)
9. Teaching students how to compete with others

Respondents were then asked the same question in relation to junior and senior high schools (grades 7-12). In order of mentions:

1. Teaching students to respect law and authority

2. Teaching students how to solve problems and think for themselves
3. Teaching students vocational skills
4. Teaching students how to get along with others
5. Teaching students the skills of speaking and listening
6. Teaching students about the world of today and yesterday (that is, history, geography, and civics)
7. Teaching students the skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic
8. Teaching students health and physical education
9. Teaching students how to compete with others

Voting Financial Help for Schools

School bond issues are still having their difficulties. Throughout the nation more are voted down than are approved.

To shed light on the attitude of voters toward the financial needs and problems of the public schools, this question has been asked in each national survey beginning with 1969:

> **Suppose the local *public* schools said they needed much more money. As you feel at this time, would you vote to raise taxes for this purpose, or would you vote against raising taxes for this purpose?**

The national results again show a greater number voting against rather than for.

For raising taxes	36%
Against raising taxes	56%
No opinion	8%

The pattern of those favoring tax increases and those opposed remains constant from year to year. Those most in favor come from these groups: the better educated, the younger age levels, business and professional people, and white-collar workers.

The most opposition to voting tax increases comes from these groups: the poorly educated, persons over 50 years of age, low income groups, and manual workers.

Interestingly enough, the persons who have suffered most from not having had a good education are the ones most opposed to meeting present needs. Or perhaps a more accurate statement is that the well-educated appreciate more fully how important a good education is.

Shifting the Tax Burden

During the year there has been much discussion about reducing the burden that has been placed on local property to support the schools. Suggestions have been made to shift more of the burden to state governments or to the federal government or both.

To test sentiment in favor of shifting more of the burden to the state government, this question was asked:

It has been suggested that state taxes be increased for everyone in order to let the state government pay a greater share of school expense and to reduce local property taxes. Would you favor an increase in state taxes so that real estate taxes could be lowered on local property?

For	55%
Against	34%
No opinion	11%

The Value-Added Tax

Still another way of helping to finance the public schools of the nation is the value-added tax, much debated in financial circles.

But the value-added tax fails to arouse much enthusiasm at this time, particularly since it is widely regarded as a regressive tax, falling more heavily on lower-income than on higher-income groups.

The question asked was this:

It has been suggested that a new kind of national sales tax, sometimes called a value-added tax, should be adopted to help reduce local property taxes that now support public schools. Do you favor or oppose such a tax?

Results for the nation:

Favor	34%
Oppose	51%
No opinion	15%

Are New School Buildings More Expensive Than They Need Be?

A majority of citizens (53%) agree that new schools are more expensive than they need be. Thirty-five percent take the opposite view; 12% have no opinion. The professional educators interviewed agreed with the majority viewpoint but by a narrower margin.

To shed light on the public's thinking about building costs, verbatim comments were recorded. They reveal the wide variety of reasons why the public believes that new schools are too expensive:

"I think they are putting too much fancy stuff in these new schools that kids don't need and don't appreciate."

"Far too much goes to architects for designing frills and not enough for basic needs."

"School boards want to build monuments. They forget that changes are going on all the time in education and that schools built today will be obsolete in 20 years. Why not build for 20 years instead of a century?"

"Unfortunately, schools are designed by people who make more money by making them elaborate; they are not designed by those who use them."

"The cost per foot of floor space for new schools here is higher than the cost of good office space. This proves to me that there is graft."

"Why not temporary and portable buildings? These can satisfy educational needs. All you need is a roof over your head and four walls."

"Our schools have a lot of things they don't need: rooms where teachers sit and smoke, wall-to-wall carpeting, air conditioners when the schools are not used in summer."

Those who hold the opposite view – that new school buildings are not too expensive – express their views in these typical comments:

"The extras spent on buildings are a good investment.

They make the kids proud of their school."

"Poor children need to spend part of their day in nice surroundings. The extras spent on buildings are good for their morale."

"Part of the process of education depends on physical environment. In this respect beautiful buildings are important."

"Because of inflation and high construction costs, all buildings built today are too expensive."

Tenure

Increasingly, the public disapproves of the idea of tenure for teachers. As the salaries of educators become comparable with those in other fields, as teachers through their unions and similar organizations develop more clout, and as the supply of teachers begins to exceed the demand, public pressure to give up tenure will almost certainly intensify.

In the present survey, here is how the nation votes on the issue of tenure, as stated in these words:

> **Most public school teachers have tenure, that is, after a two- or three-year trial period, they receive what amounts to a lifetime contract. Do you approve or disapprove of this policy?**

The results for the nation and for two key groups are as follows:

Do you approve or disapprove of tenure?

	National Survey %	Parents of School Children %	Professional Educators %
Approve	28	27	53
Disapprove	61	64	42
No opinion	11	9	5

Two years ago, in the 1970 CFK Ltd. survey, a substantially similar question produced these results: In favor of tenure, 35%; opposed, 53%; no opinion, 12%.

Placing the Blame For Poor School Work

When a child does poorly in school, who or what is chiefly to blame? The consensus: the child's home life.

To try to find out where the typical citizen places the blame for school failure, this question was asked of all those who participated in the survey, including the professional educators:

> **When some children do poorly in school, some people place the blame on the children, some on the children's home life, some on the school, and some on the teachers. Of course, all of these things share the blame, but where would you place the *chief blame?***

The results below show how the nation votes and how this compares with the vote of parents with children now in public school and with the vote of the professional educators.

	National Survey %	Parents of School Children %	Professional Educators %
On the children	14	20	8
On the children's home life	57	53	67
On the school	6	7	9
On the teachers	12	13	7

With such wide agreement that home factors are responsible for educational failure, one wonders why so little attention is being given to the solution of this problem. Neither the schools nor the teachers can be expected to re-order the home life of children, yet many surveys have shown that parents are eager for help and suggestions. This is true of the highly educated as well as the poorly educated. Certainly, if a child's success in school is largely dependent upon his home life, more time and effort should be devoted to finding out ways to deal with these home factors.

Parent-School Liaison

Many schools are now making an effort to bridge the gap between school and home but their efforts are often casual and misdirected.

Only slightly more than a third of the parents with children enrolled in the public schools had attended any meeting (from September, 1971, through April, 1972) whose purpose was to show how they, as parents, can increase the interest of their children in school work, teach them how and when to do school work, and help in other ways to promote school success.

Year-Around Schools

The proposal that schools be kept open the year around is gaining acceptance throughout the nation. When parents discover that this plan need not interfere with family vacations, some of the opposition is removed.

The percentage of citizens favoring the year-around plan has now reached a clear majority. This question was asked in the latest survey:

> **To utilize school buildings to the full extent, would you favor keeping the school open year around? Each student would attend school for nine months over the course of a year. Do you approve or disapprove?**

For the nation, the results show:

Approve	53%
Disapprove	41%
No opinion	6%

The professional educator group is even more favorably inclined towards this proposal, as revealed by the following figures:

Approve	66%
Disapprove	30%
No opinion	4%

The trend in favor of the year-around concept is evidenced by comparing the 1970 figures with the present. In the survey two years ago, a total of 42% of the nation's adults approved, 49% disapproved, and 9% had no opinion.

Making School More Interesting

Most parents say their children like to go to school. At the same time they have many ideas about how to make school more interesting. Here, in their verbatim comments, are some of their suggestions:

"Teachers could try much harder to interest students in the subjects they teach. Children can't judge how important something is. They must be told – and sold."

"I have found that if a teacher is enthusiastic about his subject the students will also be enthusiastic. And you can be sure if he isn't the students will be bored."

"More field trips, extra work, doing things they enjoy doing. You learn by doing."

"More discipline is needed to control the hoodlum element. Students can't be expected to learn when the school is in a state of chaos."

"There should be better communication between the teacher and the parent in order to make the parent more effective. The parent could then show more interest in the work the child is doing, and the child, as a result, would take more interest in school."

"My recipe would be to give more responsibility to the student and to select livelier teachers."

"Give the students more study freedom, better access to books. Let students decide what their interests are and then encourage them to follow up these interests."

"Some teachers are just plain boring. There should be some way to reward, with higher salaries, those who are able to interest students."

"Since sports have been cut out of our schools to save money, my son has lost interest in the school and in his work."

"Keep up the creative challenge all the time. School should expect more of every student – the poor as well as the good."

"In this community the kids are afraid to go to school. The bullies and problem makers should be put together and not allowed to bother other students."

"Schools should plan a whole series of special talks to get students to understand and appreciate the importance of what the school is trying to teach them."

Starting Age for School

The proposal that young children start school at the age of 4 does not arouse much enthusiasm from the American public at this time.

Interesting differences are found among different groups, however, as revealed in the percentages below:

Some educators have proposed that young children start school a year earlier – at the age of 4. Does this sound like a good idea or not?

	National %	Parents of Public School Children %	Parents of Private School Children %	Professional Educators %
Favor	32	32	41	40
Oppose	64	65	58	54
No opinion	4	3	1	6

Compulsory Attendance

A growing viewpoint among professional educators is that it makes little sense to require students to attend school when they are totally uninterested, get little of value from their school work, and all too often become a disrupting factor for other students.

This view, the findings reveal, is largely confined to educators. The public still thinks of the schools in a custodial sense. This question was asked:

In each state children are required to go to school until they reach a certain age. If you were the one to decide, what would be the age in this state? Do you believe those youngsters not interested in school should be forced to attend elementary school (grades 1-6)? Junior and senior high school (grades 7-12)?

The public and the professional educators vote this way:

Leave School at Age:	Public %	Professional Educators %
14 years	2	7
15 years	1	3

16 years	28	42
17 years	11	8
18 years	42	23
19 years	8	4
No minimum age	–	4

Compulsory attendance at elementary school is universally approved. The public votes 91% in favor of this policy.

Compulsory attendance at junior and senior high school is also favored, by 73% in the case of the public, by 56% in the case of professional educators.

Making Better Use of Outside Opportunities

The public likes the idea of permitting students to make greater use of educational opportunities found outside the school. Professional educators are even more in favor of the idea.

This is the question:

In most communities students can learn many things outside the school. Would you approve or disapprove if the schools here reduced the amount of classroom instruction to allow students to make greater use of the educational opportunities outside the school?

The results:

	Public %	Professional Educators %
Approve	56	72
Disapprove	35	26
No opinion	9	2

Least enthusiastic about the idea are the parents with children now enrolled in the public schools. They vote in favor of the idea but by a narrower margin – 49% to 43%.

Nongraded Schools

The public approves of the nongraded school concept by the very substantial margin of 71% to 22%, with 7% expressing no opinion. Professional educators interviewed approve nongraded schools by the ratio of 87% to 11%.

The question asked was this:

> **Should a student be able to progress through the school system at his own speed and without regard to the usual grade levels? This would mean that he might study seventh-grade math but only fifth-grade English. Would you favor or oppose such a plan in the local schools?**

Approval of this idea is so high throughout the nation that the movement toward nongraded schools will undoubtedly accelerate over the next decade.

Attitudes Toward Local School Boards

Nationally, school boards get high marks from the public for their efforts to improve the quality of education. And those who are in the best position to know – parents who have children now enrolled in the public schools and professional educators – give them the highest marks.

This question was put to those included in the present survey:

> **Now, a question about the local school board. . . . Does it work hard to improve the quality of education?**

The national result is:

Yes	59%
No	19%
No opinion	22%

The professional educators, in response to the same question, say:

Yes	67%
No	25%
No opinion	8%

In the case of parents with children now attending public schools, the vote is:

Yes	66%
No	21%
No opinion	13%

Teaching as a Career

The public's high regard for teachers and for the teaching profession has been evidenced in many ways in these annual surveys. In the present study, two out of every three citizens interviewed said they would like to have a child of theirs take up teaching as a career. The vote:

Yes	67%
No	22%
No opinion	11%

While this percentage is very high, it is worth noting that it was higher in earlier surveys. Comments by those interviewed shed light on the drop. Many are aware that teaching jobs are scarce and that supply in many areas exceeds demand. Another reason, frequently voiced, is that teaching has become "dangerous," with children permitted to run "wild" in many schools.

The Major Problems

What do you think are the biggest problems with which the *public* schools in this community must deal?

	National Totals	No Children In Schools	Public School Parents	Private School Parents	Professional Educators
N=	1,790	996	698	144	270
	%	%	%	%	%
Discipline	23	23	23	26	20
Integration/ segregation	18	20	14	17	23
Finances	19	17	22	16	35
Teachers	14	14	14	16	13
Facilities	5	4	7	4	11
Curriculum	5	4	5	4	12

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Parents' lack of interest	6	6	6	3	18
Large school, large classes	10	9	10	15	5
Dope, drugs	4	4	4	3	11
There are no problems	2	3	2	2	8
Miscellaneous	9	8	11	12	12
Don't know/ no answer	12	13	12	9	4

What's Right With the Schools

In your opinion, in what ways are your local *public* schools particularly good?

	National Totals	No Children In Schools	Public School Parents	Private School Parents	Professional Educators
N=	1,790	996	698	144	270
	%	%	%	%	%
Teachers	19	15	28	13	29
Curriculum	21	16	28	15	42
Facilities	8	7	9	8	16
Up-to-date teaching method	5	4	8	6	12
Extra curricular activities	5	3	8	8	6
No racial conflicts	7	7	6	4	11
Small school-small classes	3	2	5	1	4
Good administration	3	2	5	3	6
Good student/ teacher relationships	4	2	6	4	6
Parents are interested, participate	2	1	3	3	3
Discipline	2	1	2	—	2
Transportation system		1	1	2	1
Equal opportunities for all	8	8	8	7	19
Close to home	1	1	2	3	1
Nothing is good	7	7	6	15	5
Miscellaneous	1	1	1	—	1
Don't know/ no answer	33	43	19	35	5

Student Rights and Privileges

Generally speaking, do the local public school students in this community have too many rights and privileges, or not enough?

	National Totals	No Children In Schools	Public School Parents	Private School Parents	Professional Educators
	N=1,790	996	698	144	270
	%	%	%	%	%
Too many	41	41	40	40	33
Not enough	11	12	9	12	17
Just right	33	28	42	28	42
No opinion	15	19	9	20	8
	100	100	100	100	100

Rights of Older Students

Should students who are 18 years of age, and now have the right to vote, have more rights and privileges than other students?

	National Totals	No Children In Schools	Public School Parents	Private School Parents	Professional Educators
	N=1,790	996	698	144	270
	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	21	24	17	19	24
No	73	71	77	76	73
Don't know	6	5	6	5	3
	100	100	100	100	100

School Starting Age

Some educators have proposed that young children start school a year earlier – at the age of 4. Does this sound like a good idea or not?

	National Totals	No Children In Schools	Public School Parents	Private School Parents	Professional Educators
N=	1,790	996	698	144	270
	%	%	%	%	%
Good idea	32	31	32	41	40
Poor idea	64	64	65	58	54
No opinion	4	5	3	1	6
	100	100	100	100	100

Same question, answers by other categories.

	Percent Totals	Good Idea %	Poor Idea %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
Sex				
Men	100	33	63	4
Women	100	31	65	4
Race				
White	100	28	68	4
Nonwhite	100	63	34	3
Education				
Elementary grades	100	24	72	4
High school incomplete	100	29	67	4
High school complete	100	34	63	3
Technical, trade, or business school	100	38	61	1
College incomplete	100	37	56	7
College graduate	100	33	63	4
Occupation				
Business & professional	100	33	61	6
Clerical & sales	100	42	56	2
Farm	100	14	82	4
Skilled labor	100	29	69	2
Unskilled labor	100	36	61	3
Non-labor force	100	27	68	5
Age				
Under 21 years	100	39	54	7
21 to 29 years	100	47	51	2
30 to 49 years	100	32	64	4
50 years and over	100	24	72	4
Religion				
Protestant	100	28	69	3
Roman Catholic	100	33	63	4
Jewish	100	54	34	12
All others	100	48	46	6
Region				
East	100	36	59	5
Midwest	100	28	70	2
South	100	29	68	3
West	100	37	59	4
Income				
$15,000 and over	100	34	62	4
$10,000 to $14,999	100	36	61	3
$ 7,000 to $ 9,999	100	30	67	3
$ 5,000 to $ 6,999	100	33	62	5
$ 3,000 to $ 4,999	100	29	67	4
Under $3,000	100	23	72	5

Community size				
500,000 and over	100	45	49	6
50,000 to 499,999	100	33	64	3
25,000 to 49,999	100	29	67	4
Under 25,000	100	22	75	3

Teacher Tenure

Most public school teachers have tenure; that is, after a two- or three-year trial period, they receive what amounts to a lifetime contract. Do you approve or disapprove of this policy?

	National Totals	No Children In Schools	Public School Parents	Private School Parents	Professional Educators
N=	1,790	996	698	144	270
	%	%	%	%	%
Approve	28	28	27	28	53
Disapprove	61	59	64	63	42
No opinion	11	13	9	9	5
	100	100	100	100	100

Compulsory Attendance, Upper Age Limits

In each state children are required to go to school until they reach a certain age. If you were the one to decide, what would be the age?

	National Totals	No Children In Schools	Public School Parents	Private School Parents	Professional Educators
N=	1,790	996	698	144	270
	%	%	%	%	%
14 years & under	2	2	0	1	7
15 years	1	2	1	1	3
16 years	28	29	28	18	42
Over 16 years	61	60	64	65	35
Don't know	8	7	7	15	9
	100	100	100	100	96*

*Four percent of the professional educators opted for no minimum age; that is, they do not believe in compulsory education.

Same question, answers by other categories.

	Per-cent Totals	14 Yrs. %	15 Yrs. %	16 Yrs. %	Over 16 Yrs. %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
Sex						
Men	100	2	2	31	57	8
Women	100	1	1	26	65	7
Race						
White	100	2	2	30	59	7
Nonwhite	100	1	0	11	77	11
Education						
Elementary grades	100	1	1	28	59	11
High school incomplete	100	1	1	21	70	7
High school complete	100	1	1	25	67	6
Technical, trade, or business school	100	2	2	35	59	2
College incomplete	100	2	2	36	53	7
College graduate	100	5	3	36	46	10
Occupation						
Business & professional	100	3	2	33	54	8
Clerical & sales	100	1	2	25	64	8
Farm	100	0	1	26	72	1
Skilled labor	100	1	0	25	66	8
Unskilled labor	100	1	1	23	67	8
Non-labor force	100	2	3	31	56	8
Age						
Under 21 years	100	1	1	29	61	8
21 to 29 years	100	3	1	26	62	8
30 to 49 years	100	1	1	27	63	8
50 years and over	100	2	2	30	61	5
Religion						
Protestant	100	2	1	28	63	6
Roman Catholic	100	1	1	24	67	7
Jewish	100	3	6	35	39	7
All others	100	3	2	37	47	11
Region						
East	100	3	2	28	59	8
Midwest	100	1	1	31	62	5
South	100	1	1	22	67	9
West	100	2	3	32	57	6
Income						
$15,000 and over	100	3	3	35	52	7
$10,000 to $14,999	100	0	1	29	65	5
$ 7,000 to $ 9,999	100	1	0	26	66	7
$ 5,000 to $ 6,999	100	1	1	23	67	8

$ 3,000 to $ 4,999	100	3	2	27	61	6
Under $3,000	100	3	3	25	58	11
Community size						
500,000 and over	100	2	2	24	64	8
50,000 to 499,999	100	2	3	31	59	5
25,000 to 49,999	100	2	0	13	84	1
Under 25,000	100	2	2	30	60	6

Compulsory Attendance, Lower Age Limits

Do you believe those youngsters not interested in school should be forced to attend elementary school (grades 1 to 6)?

	National Totals	No Children In Schools	Public School Parents	Private School Parents	Professional Educators
N=	1,790	996	698	144	270
	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	91	91	92	93	91
No	7	7	7	6	9
Don't know	2	2	1	1	0
	100	100	100	100	100

Junior and senior high school (grades 7 to 12)?

	National Totals	No Children In Schools	Public School Parents	Private School Parents	Professional Educators
Yes	73	71	75	76	56
No	24	25	23	18	38
Don't know	3	4	2	6	6
	100	100	100	100	100

Voting Tax Increases

Suppose the local *public* schools said they needed much more money. As you feel at this time, would you vote to raise taxes for this purpose, or would you vote against raising taxes for this purpose.

	National Totals	No Children In Schools	Public School Parents	Private School Parents	Professional Educators
N=	1,790	996	698	144	270
	%	%	%	%	%
For	36	35	37	38	67
Against	56	56	56	55	29
No opinion	8	9	7	7	4
	100	100	100	100	100

Same question, answers by other categories.

	Percent Totals	For %	Against %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
Sex				
Men	100	37	56	7
Women	100	35	57	8
Race				
White	100	35	57	8
Nonwhite	100	41	48	11
Education				
Elementary grades	100	27	64	9
High school incomplete	100	32	61	7
High school complete	100	33	60	7
Technical, trade, or business school	100	38	59	3
College incomplete	100	45	45	10
College graduate	100	50	41	9
Occupation				
Business & professional	100	43	50	7
Clerical & sales	100	47	47	6
Farm	100	26	65	9
Skilled labor	100	33	60	7
Unskilled labor	100	30	61	9
Non-labor force	100	30	62	8
Age				
Under 21 years	100	45	42	13
21-29 years	100	41	49	10
30-49 years	100	36	57	7
50 years and older	100	32	61	7
Religion				
Protestant	100	36	57	7
Roman Catholic	100	32	59	9
Jewish	100	55	39	6
All others	100	35	52	13
Region				
East	100	33	58	9
Midwest	100	37	58	5
South	100	37	53	10
West	100	36	55	9
Income				
$15,000 and over	100	39	54	7
$10,000 to $14,999	100	40	52	8
$ 7,000 to $ 9,999	100	34	59	7
$ 5,000 to $ 6,999	100	36	58	6
$ 3,000 to $ 4,999	100	27	64	9
Under $3,000	100	27	58	15

Community size				
500,000 and over	100	37	54	9
50,000 to 499,999	100	37	55	8
25,000 to 49,999	100	22	78	0
Under 25,000	100	35	57	8

Higher State Taxes, Lower Property Taxes

It has been suggested that state taxes be increased for everyone in order to let the state government pay a greater share of school expense and to reduce local property taxes. Would you favor an increase in state taxes so that real estate taxes could be lowered on local property?

	National Totals	No Children In Schools	Public School Parents	Private School Parents	Profes-sional Educators
N=	1,790	986	668	144	270
	%	%	%	%	%
For	55	56	54	51	68
Against	34	33	36	37	27
No opinion	11	11	10	12	5
	100	100	100	100	100

Same question, answers by other categories.

	Percent Totals	For %	Against %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
Sex				
Men	100	55	35	10
Women	100	55	33	12
Race				
White	100	55	35	10
Nonwhite	100	56	30	14
Education				
Elementary grades	100	49	35	16
High school incomplete	100	56	34	10
High school complete	100	57	31	12
Technical, trade, or business school	100	48	41	11
College incomplete	100	56	36	8
College graduate	100	58	35	7

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Occupation				
Business & professional	100	57	35	8
Clerical & sales	100	53	29	18
Farm	100	59	26	15
Skilled labor	100	52	40	8
Unskilled labor	100	58	34	8
Non-labor force	100	52	33	15
Age				
Under 21 years	100	63	24	13
21-29 years	100	55	35	10
30-49 years	100	55	35	10
50 years and over	100	54	34	12
Religion				
Protestant	100	55	34	11
Roman Catholic	100	57	33	10
Jewish	100	54	37	9
All others	100	49	38	13
Region				
East	100	54	35	11
Midwest	100	58	32	10
South	100	48	38	14
West	100	61	31	8
Income				
$15,000 and over	100	55	35	10
$10,000 to $14,999	100	54	36	10
$ 7,000 to $ 9,999	100	55	37	8
$ 5,000 to $ 6,999	100	56	32	12
$ 3,000 to $ 4,999	100	60	27	13
Under $3,000	100	51	31	18
Community size				
500,000 and over	100	55	33	12
50,000 to 499,999	100	52	36	12
25,000 to 49,999	100	58	36	6
Under 25,000	100	56	34	10

The Value-Added Tax

It has been suggested that a new kind of national sales tax, sometimes called a value-added tax, should be adopted to help reduce local property taxes that now support public schools. Do you favor or oppose such a tax?

	National Totals	No Children In Schools	Public School Parents	Private School Parents	Professional Educators
N=	1,790	996	698	144	270
	%	%	%	%	%
Favor	35	35	30	37	38
Oppose	51	50	54	51	53
No opinion	14	15	16	12	9
	100	100	100	100	100

Increasing the Child's Interest in School

Can anything be done by the school to increase your child's interest in going to school?

	Public School Parents	Private School Parents
N=	698	144
	%	%
Yes	42	30
No	46	51
Don't know	12	19
	100	100

Placing Blame for Poor School Work

When some children do poorly in school, some people place the blame on the children, some on the children's home life, some on the school, and some on the teachers. Of course, all of these things share the blame, but where would you place the *chief* blame?

	National Totals	No Children In Schools	Public School Parents	Private School Parents	Professional Educators
N=	1,790	996	698	144	270
	%	%	%	%	%
On children	14	11	20	12	8
On children's home life	57	61	53	58	67
On schools	6	5	7	10	9
On teachers	12	11	13	12	7
No opinion	13	15	12	14	10

Note: Columns add to more than 100% because of some multiple responses.

Teaching as a Career

Would you like to have a child of yours take up teaching in the public schools as a career?

	National Totals	No Children In Schools	Public School Parents	Private School Parents	Professional Educators
N=	1,790	996	698	144	270
	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	67	65	71	61	72
No	22	21	21	31	22
Don't know	11	14	8	8	6
	100	100	100	100	100

The Nongraded School

Should a student be able to progress through the school system at his own speed and without regard to the usual grade levels? This would mean that he might study seventh-grade math but only fifth-grade English. Would you favor or oppose such a plan in the local schools?

	National Totals	No Children In Schools	Public School Parents	Private School Parents	Professional Educators
N=	1,790	996	698	144	270
	%	%	%	%	%
Favor	71	69	74	73	87
Oppose	22	22	22	22	11
No opinion	7	9	4	5	2
	100	100	100	100	100

The Year-Around School

To utilize school buildings to the full extent, would you favor keeping the school open year around? Each student would attend school for nine months over the course of a year. Do you approve or disapprove?

	National Totals	No Children In Schools	Public School Parents	Private School Parents	Professional Educators
N=	1,790	996	698	144	270
	%	%	%	%	%
Approve	53	56	50	52	66
Disapprove	41	37	47	43	30
Don't know	6	7	3	5	4
	100	100	100	100	100

Parents' Meetings

Have you attended *any* meeting since last September where the chief topic was how you, as a parent, could increase the interest of your child(ren) in his (their) school work, how and when to do homework, and other such matters that show what can be done at home to help the child in school?

	Public School Parents	Private School Parents
N=	698	144
	%	%
Yes	37	41
No	61	56
Can't recall	2	3
	100	100

The School Without Walls

In most communities students can learn many things outside the school. Would you approve or disapprove if the schools here reduced the amount of classroom instruction to allow students to make greater use of the educational opportunities outside the school?

	National Totals	No Children In Schools	Public School Parents	Private School Parents	Professional Educators
N=	1,790	996	398	144	270
	%	%	%	%	%
Approve	56	60	49	63	72

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Disapprove	34	29	43	29	26
No opinion	10	11	8	8	2
	100	100	100	100	100

Rating the School Board

Now, a question about the local school board. Does it work hard to improve the quality of education?

	National Totals	No Children In Schools	Public School Parents	Private School Parents	Professional Educators
N=	1,790	996	698	144	270
	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	59	54	66	58	67
No	19	18	21	19	25
No opinion	22	28	13	23	8
	100	100	100	100	100

Analysis of Respondents

National Adults

No children in school	56%
Public school parents	39%*
Parochial and private school parents	8%*

*Totals exceed 44% because some parents have children attending more than one kind of school.

A key element in making comparisons with earlier years is to keep constant the number of persons with *no children in school.* This has been done by a simple weighting process carried out by use of the computer.

Sex	%
Men	48
Women	52
	100

Race	
White	89
Nonwhite	11
	100

	Fourth Annual Poll
Age	
18-20 years	5
21-29 years	19
30-49 years	39
50 years and over	37
	100
Religion	
Protestant	61
Roman Catholic	26
Jewish	4
Others	9
	100
Region	
East	29
Midwest	27
South	26
West	18
	100
Community size	
500,000 and over	33
50,000 to 499,999	22
25,000 to 49,999	2
Under 25,000	43
	100
Education	
Elementary grades	16
High school incomplete	20
High school complete	32
Technical, trade, or business school	5
College incomplete	14
College graduate	13
	100
Occupation	
Business and professional	26
Clerical and sales	11
Farm	5
Skilled labor	17
Unskilled labor	21
Non-labor force	18
Undesignated	2
	100
Income	
$15,000 and over	21
$10,000 – $14,999	26
$ 7,000 – $ 9,999	17
$ 5,000 – $ 6,999	15

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$ 4,000 – $ 4,999	6
$ 3,000 – $ 3,999	5
Under $2,999	8
Undesignated	2
	100

Chapter 6

Fifth Annual Gallup Poll of Public Attitudes Toward Education — 1973

Purpose of the Study

The survey reported in the following pages was sponsored by CFK Ltd. and is the fifth in an annual series designed to measure and record the attitude of American citizens toward their public schools.

Each year new areas are covered as new problems come forth. Some questions are repeated from earlier years in order to measure trends.

The findings of this study apply to the nation as a whole and not necessarily to any single community. These findings do, however, permit local communities to compare results of surveys conducted within their own community with the results of the national survey.

The study represents the joint planning of the staff of CFK Ltd. and the staff of Gallup International. Valuable help in selection of the areas of interests and concern to be included in the survey came from: Medill Bair, superintendent of schools, Hartford, Conn. (now director, Educational Collaboratory of Greater Boston, Harvard University); B. Frank Brown, director, Information and Services, I/D/E/A, Melbourne, Fla.; George L. Brown, state senator, Colorado, and executive director, Metro Denver Urban Coalition; Stanley Elam, editor, *Phi Delta Kappan,* Bloomington, Ind.; Richard Koeppe, superintendent, Cherry Creek School District No. 5, Englewood, Colo.; Etta Lee Powell, principal, North Bethesda Junior High School, Bethesda, Md.; Donald Waldrip, superintendent of schools, Cincinnati, O.

Research Procedure

The Sample. The sample embraced a total of 1,627 adults. It is described as a modified probability sample of the nation. Interviewing was conducted in every area of the country and in all types of communities. These communities, taken together, represent a true microcosm of the nation. A full description of the adult sample will be found at the end of this report.

A separate survey was undertaken to learn the views of professional educators. This sample embraced 306 educators (teachers, assistant principals, principals, administrators, superintendents). These persons also were interviewed in every area of the country and in all types of communities.

The Interviewing Form. Questions included in the questionnaire were selected after several pretests conducted by the field staff maintained by the Gallup organizations.

Time of Interviewing. The field work for this study was conducted during the period of May 11 through 13, 1973.

Major Problems Confronting The Public Schools in 1973

When the public is asked to name the most important problems confronting the public schools in their community, discipline leads the list – as it has four out of the last five years.

There has been a slight change, however. The percentage of respondents naming discipline is not quite so high as it was in 1969, a period of turmoil in the colleges and universities. But rising in the list, and now in second place, is the complex of problems arising from integration/segregation. Five years ago these racial issues were fifth on the list of problems.

In the 1969 survey, the use of drugs by students was mentioned by very few. In the 1973 survey, drug use is mentioned by enough respondents to place it fifth in the list of problems. In 1969 lack of proper school facilities was second in the list; now this problem has dropped to ninth place.

Problems do change, it can be seen, even in a relatively short period of time. Unfortunately, the two problems which head the list today – discipline and racial disorder – are the very stuff from which front-page newspaper articles are born. This bad publicity has had a marked influence on the public, as survey results show, and especially on those persons who do not have children in the schools and who must rely to a greater extent, therefore, on the media for their information about the public schools.

Here is the list of problems confronting the public schools, in order of mentions for 1973:

1. Lack of discipline
2. Integration/segregation problems
3. Lack of proper financial support
4. Difficulty of getting "good" teachers
5. Use of drugs
6. Size of school/classes
7. Poor curriculum
8. Parents' lack of interest
9. Lack of proper facilities
10. School board policies

When professional educators were asked the same question, their replies in general agree with the public's, with a few notable differences. For example, lack of proper financial support rates as the number one problem with this group, and the lack of good teachers number eight. The educators would include pupils' lack of interest along with parents' lack of interest among the top 10 problems.

In What Ways Are the Local Public Schools Particularly Good?

Having directed the thinking of respondents to the problems – to what is wrong with the public schools – it was only proper to ask those included in the survey to tell what they thought was right. Here are their answers, listed in order of mentions:

1. The curriculum
2. The teachers
3. School facilities
4. Extracurricular activities
5. Up-to-date teaching methods
6. Absence of racial conflicts
7. Good administration

Professional educators name the good points about the public schools in about this same order. They head their list with "good teachers" and place both up-to-date teaching methods and good administration higher on their lists.

In an earlier survey report the absence of objective criteria in judging the public schools was noted. The same observation holds for the present study. Factors that would be important in a program of accountability are seldom, if ever, mentioned.

Changes of Attitude in Recent Years

Included in the present survey was one of the most revealing questions asked in this series of annual surveys:

> **In recent years has your overall attitude toward the *public* schools in your community become more favorable or less favorable?**

Replies to this question, and analysis of the reasons why respondents feel more favorably or less favorably toward the schools, reveal a basic fact: The more respondents know at firsthand about the public schools, the more favorable are their views; the less interested and less well informed, the less favorable. Most important is the fact that persons who depend on the media for their information are most critical of the schools.

Parents with children now in the public schools say they have become more favorable in their views of the public schools in recent years; those who have no children in school hold the reverse opinion.

Professional educators are about evenly divided between those whose views have become more favorable and those whose views have become less favorable.

Here are the results by groups:

	National Totals	No Children In Schools	Public School Parents	Private School Parents	Professional Educators
	N= 1,627	928	620	124	306
	%	%	%	%	%
Attitudes Toward Schools					
Becoming more favorable	32	25	42	31	39
Becoming less favorable	36	38	31	46	41
No change/ no opinion	32	37	27	23	20
	100	100	100	100	100

It can be argued that, of the groups named above, the best judge of the public schools should be the parents of children who are now attending these schools. And the weight of their opinion is clearly on the favorable side.

From this, it might be assumed that an information program that gives the public a better idea of what the schools are doing, and trying to do, would have an important impact on the general public's views.

Sources of Information About the Schools

For the general public, the best source of information about the public schools in their communities is the students themselves. Of the media, the best source of information is clearly the newspapers. The broadcast media – radio and television – are cited by only half as many.

Parents of students rank second as a source of information, with teachers and the school board receiving the same number of mentions. What the survey findings seem to indicate, therefore, is that attitudes about the quality of the local schools are based upon information gained from many sources: the firsthand experience of students and teachers and from other parents, as well as from the media of communication, especially newspapers. The question:

What are the sources of information you use to judge the quality of schools in your community; that is, where do you get your information about the schools?

The results:

	National Totals	No Children In Schools	Public School Parents	Private School Parents	Professional Educators
N=	1,627	928	620	124	306
	%	%	%	%	%
Sources of Information					
Students	43	35	56	48	48
Newspapers	38	42	33	41	34
School board/ faculty	33	24	45	46	82
Parents of students	33	31	35	41	39
Other adults in community	23	24	22	20	27
Radio and/or television	20	25	14	18	21
Other	12	12	13	15	20
PTA	3	–	7	5	1
Undesignated	4	6	2	2	1

(Totals exceed 100% because of multiple responses.)

Discipline

Because discipline so regularly leads the public's list of "problems" of the public schools, an attempt was made to probe into the meaning attached to this word by the public. Respondents were therefore asked this open-ended question:

When we talk about "discipline" in the schools, just what does this mean to you?

The following statements convey some idea of the wide range of views:

"Discipline is respect for the teacher on the part of the child; and respect for the child on the part of the teacher."

"Learning taking place without confusion."

"Keeping children so interested in what they are learning that obeying the rules is almost automatic."

"Discipline is self-control and a proper respect for other students, for those in authority."

"Without discipline neither school nor society can exist. The world would be bedlam."

"Proper discipline makes children happier. When they run wild, they are undone by the confusion they create."

Most respondents see discipline as a matter of obeying rules, respecting views of parents, teachers, and others in authority, and being considerate of fellow students who wish to learn in a peaceful atmosphere.

While law and order have become almost code words for the conservative viewpoint in politics, the basic concept is held in high regard by the public. In fact, in the 1972 survey, when asked to choose from a list of nine goals of education, the public placed "teaching students to respect law and authority" as the top goal for students in grades 7-12.

Are High Schools Getting Too Large?

In the 1950s James Conant argued persuasively that high schools should be large because only the large high schools could afford to have special courses in special subjects, since small high schools would not have enough students interested in these fields to warrant separate classes.

Apparently the tide has turned. Today all groups, including professional educators, are of the opinion that schools are too large; only a relatively small percentage hold that they are not big enough.

The ideal size of a school usually gets related in the typical person's mind to the size of school that he attended. To minimize this factor, a question was designed that sought to remove the issue at least one step from the respondent's own experience. The question that proved best, after testing, is as follows:

> **In some areas of the U.S., new towns and cities are being built. This gives city planners the opportunity to build school facilities that are "just right" in size.**

What do you think would be the "ideal" number of students in a high school?

After this question was asked, a second question sought to elicit opinions on the general issue of whether high schools are too large or not large enough. Replies to the latter question show that major groups making up the public agree quite closely. Professional educators show even a larger proportion holding the view that schools are too large.

Here is the question:

Do you think high schools today are getting too large or aren't they large enough?

	National Totals	No Children In Schools	Public School Parents	Private School Parents	Professional Educators
N=	1,627	928	620	124	306
	%	%	%	%	%
Getting too large	57	55	60	61	76
Not large enough	13	12	14	12	5
Just right	15	15	15	15	9
No opinion	15	18	11	12	9
	100	100	100	100	99*

*Where sum of percentages in columns does not total 100%, it is due to rounding of the figures.

When the views of all persons who gave a figure which represented, for them, the ideal size of a high school in a "new city," the median figure turns out to be 500.

Does Class Size Make a Difference?

While recent research findings point to the fact that, within certain limits, size of class makes little difference in student achievement, the general public is still convinced that smaller classes make "a great deal of difference" – a view shared by the professional educators who participated in this survey.

Every major group in the population holds the belief that student achievement is related to class size. The question asked respondents was this:

> **In some school districts, the typical class has as many as 35 students; in other districts, only 20. In regard to the achievement or progress of students, do you think small classes make a great deal of difference, little difference, or no difference at all?**

	National Totals	No Children In Schools	Public School Parents	Private School Parents	Professional Educators
N=	1,627	928	620	124	306
	%	%	%	%	%
A great deal of difference	79	75	83	87	85
Little difference	11	11	11	7	11
No difference	6	8	4	4	1
No opinion	4	6	2	2	2
	100	100	100	100	99*

*Due to rounding

Money Spent Related to Student Achievement

Just as some studies have shown that student achievement is not closely related to class size, so other studies have shown that the amount of money spent per child on his education – again within certain limits – bears little relationship to the child's progress in school. Since this research will almost certainly be a factor in future consideration of the financial needs of the public schools, it is important to discover how the public feels on this issue. Is quality of education closely correlated in the public's thinking with the amount a school district spends on the educational program per child?

The answers bring to light a number of interesting differences between the general public and the educators – and reveal some inconsistency in the thinking of the average citizen on this matter.

Professional educators say that the additional expenditure of money per child makes a "great difference." The public is evenly divided as to whether it makes a "great difference" or "little difference." If those who answer "no difference" are added to those who say "little difference," then a plurality of the public could be said to hold the view that additional expenditures by school districts make little or no difference. And yet these same respondents, in a related question, held that small classes were important to educational quality and to student achievement.

What this means, it seems reasonable to assume, is that the public has not yet connected school expenditures per child to class size.

The question was stated in this fashion:

> **In some school districts, about $600 is spent per child per school year; some school districts spend more than $1,200. Do you think this additional expenditure of money makes a great deal of difference in the achievement or progress of students — or little difference?**

Here are the answers:

	National Totals	No Children In Schools	Public School Parents	Private School Parents	Professional Educators
N=	1,627	928	620	124	306
	%	%	%	%	%
Great deal of difference	39	35	45	40	59
Little difference	38	39	36	39	25
No difference	10	11	8	10	6
Don't know	13	15	11	11	10
	100	100	100	100	100

State Financial Help to Schools

The suggestion that state governments increase taxes to pay more of the cost of local schools is voted down by the public by a 5:4 ratio. Professional educators, on the other hand, like the idea, and cast a vote of more than 2 to 1 in favor of the proposal.

In last year's survey it was discovered that if a definite promise is made that local property taxes will be reduced, the public would favor shifting more of the costs of operating the local schools to the state government. But without such a promise, the public opposes the plan.

The question this year was stated as follows:

It has been suggested that state government through increased taxes pay more of the cost of local school expenses. Would you favor or oppose an increase in state taxes for this purpose?

	National Totals	No Children In Schools	Public School Parents	Private School Parents	Professional Educators
	N= 1,627	928	620	124	306
	%	%	%	%	%
Favor increase	40	38	44	41	65
Oppose increase	50	51	49	52	29
No opinion	10	11	7	7	6
	100	100	100	100	100

The 1972 question was:

It has been suggested that state taxes be increased for everyone in order to let the state government pay a greater share of school expense and to reduce local property taxes. Would you favor an increase in state taxes so that real estate taxes could be lowered on local property?

The results:

	National Totals	No Children In Schools	Public School Parents	Private School Parents	Professional Educators
	N= 1,790	996	698	144	270
	%	%	%	%	%
For	55	56	54	51	68
Against	34	33	36	37	27
No opinion	11	11	10	12	5
	100	100	100	100	100

Satisfaction with Curriculum

Parents of school children – both those whose children are now attending the public schools and those with children in private or parochial schools – say they are satisfied with their children's courses. When asked if their sons and daughters are "learning the things you believe [they] should," more than eight in 10 parents of children in the public schools say yes. Parents with children in private or independent schools express their satisfaction at an even higher level.

The question:

Now, thinking about your oldest child in school (elementary, junior or senior high – not college): Do you think he (she) is learning the things you believe he (she) should be learning?

	National Totals	Public School Parents	Private School Parents
N=	699	620	124
	%	%	%
Yes	82	81	86
No	13	14	10
Don't know	5	5	4
	100	100	100

A second question asked if the child (the oldest one in public school) is happy going to school, or whether he (or she) attends school simply because he (she) is required to do so. Equally high percentages of parents say yes to this question. Only one parent in seven (14%) reports that the child in question goes to school only because he must. These results need to be interpreted carefully. There are many degrees of liking; if a parent does not meet active resistance from the child, he is likely to assume that the child likes school.

But even taking the results at face value, the fact that one child in seven goes to school only because he is required to presents a major problem for the schools, especially if children in this category are disruptive and the source of many discipline problems.

The question:

Is he (she) happy to go to school – that is, does he (she) go to school because he (she) wants to go or simply because he (she) is required to attend?

	National Totals	Public School Parents	Private School Parents
	N= 899	620	124
	%	%	%
Wants to go	83	83	83
Goes because it is required	14	15	12
No opinion	3	2	5
	100	100	100

More Emphasis to Career Education

Few proposals receive such overwhelming approval today as the suggestion that schools give more emphasis to a study of trades, professions, and businesses to help students decide on their careers. Nine in 10 persons in all major groups sampled in this survey say they would like to have the schools give more emphasis to this part of the educational program.

And most of those who vote for this greater emphasis say that this program should start with junior and senior high school, although many professional educators think it should start even earlier — in the elementary grades.

The question:

Should public schools give more emphasis to a study of trades, professions, and businesses to help students decide on their careers?

	National Totals	No Children In School	Public School Parents	Private School Parents	Professional Educators
	N= 1,627	928	620	124	306
	%	%	%	%	%
Yes, more emphasis	90	90	90	89	90
No	7	7	7	9	9
No opinion	3	3	3	2	1
	100	100	100	100	100

Alternative Schools

The surveys conducted in this five-year series have indicated that the public is usually sympathetic to new educational ideas, especially if these innovations represent a solution, in whole or in part, to a situation that needs correcting. The public's attitude can be summed up in a statement which comes frequently from respondents who are being asked to express their views on a new proposal: "Something must be done and nothing will be lost in giving this [plan or proposal] a try."

The American public, it has been found in countless surveys, is pragmatic. If a plan works, that's fine; if it doesn't, get rid of it. And the people want to be the judge as to whether or not it works.

Throughout the nation the press reports the difficulties schools are having with racial problems, school dropouts, discipline, and juvenile delinquency; the public is ready to try any solution that gives hope in solving these problems. One of the solutions is the alternative school, and the public seems ready to give it a try – and to judge later how well it works.

The plans now being tried in various areas of the nation all vary in some manner; for this reason the question put to the public in describing the alternative school had to be stated in a very generalized form. It was stated as follows:

> **For students who are not interested in, or are bored with, the usual kind of education, it has been proposed that new kinds of local schools be established. They usually place more responsibility upon the student for what he learns and how he learns it. Some use the community as their laboratory and do not use the usual kind of classrooms. Do you think this is a good idea or a poor idea?**

	National Totals	No Children In Schools	Public School Parents	Private School Parents	Professional Educators
N=	1,627	928	620	124	306
	%	%	%	%	%
Good idea	62	62	62	61	80
Poor idea	26	24	28	27	15
No opinion	12	14	10	12	5
	100	100	100	100	100

From the above table it can be seen that professional educators, who are much more familiar with this idea than the general public, give it an even higher vote of approval.

Parents' Right To Sue

At least one suit has been filed against a U.S. school district by the parents of a student who had not been taught to read after a number of years in school.

The question arises as to whether the public believes that some kind of accountability should be imposed by legal action.

Fortunately, at least for those in charge of school financing, the public votes no on this issue by a substantial majority. Least in favor, as one might expect, are professional educators, who vote the suggestion down 5-1.

However, if even one parent in 100 holds to this view, future trouble may be in store for the schools. Parents of children now in the public schools vote 28% in favor of this idea to 64% against.

The question:

> **Do you think parents should have the right to sue a school district if a student of normal intelligence and without physical disabilities reaches the sixth grade without being able to read?**

	National Totals	No Children In School	Public School Parents	Private School Parents	Professional Educators
N=	1,627	928	620	124	306
	%	%	%	%	%
Yes, should have right	27	26	28	35	16
No	64	65	64	60	80
No opinion	9	9	8	5	4
	100	100	100	100	100

Attitudes Toward School Integration

Professional educators and parents with one or more children now attending public school are more inclined than other respondents to say that not enough is being done to integrate the schools throughout the nation.

While the overall vote shows slightly more holding the view that less should be done to integrate the schools, it is worth noting that attitudes toward integration are far less antagonistic than attitudes toward busing. The two – integration and busing – should not be confused. While busing is one way to bring about integration, polls have consistently shown an overwhelming majority of Americans opposed to achieving integration in this manner. Far too many persons considering this problem confuse ends with means.

The question asked:

> **Now, a question about how you feel about school integration. Do you believe more should be done – or less should be done – to integrate the schools throughout the nation?**

	National Totals	No Children In School	Public School Parents	Private School Parents	Professional Educators
N=	1,627	928	620	124	306
	%	%	%	%	%
More should be done	30	29	31	26	41
Less should be done	38	40	36	36	29
No change from present	23	21	25	27	22
No opinion	9	10	8	11	8
	100	100	100	100	100

All respondents were asked if they felt differently about integration now than they did a few years ago. Most said their views hadn't changed; only one person in six said he had changed his views in recent years. When the views of persons in this group are examined, responses show a slight change against integration.

Should Children Start School at Age 4?

The proposal to have children start school at age 4 arises with increasing frequency. Such a plan would, according to some authorities, make it possible to end schooling at the age of 17 for the typical student, thus permitting him to go to work or enter college a year earlier. But generally it is defended on other grounds.

The proposal still does not meet with majority approval on the part of the public – or, for that matter; of professional educators.

Moreover, there is no survey evidence to indicate a trend in the direction of support for such a plan. In the survey conducted in 1972, the vote in favor of this proposal was 32%, with 64% opposed and 4% with no opinion. Comparable figures for this year are: 30% in favor, 64% opposed, and 6% with no opinion.

The question:

Some educators have proposed that children start school one year earlier, that is, at age 4. Would you approve or disapprove of such a plan in this community?

	National Totals	No Children In School	Public School Parents	Private School Parents	Professional Educators
N=	1,627	928	620	124	306
	%	%	%	%	%
Favor	30	29	31	40	32
Oppose	64	64	64	55	63
No opinion	6	7	5	5	5
	100	100	100	100	100

In private schools, where the practice of starting children at age 4 is more common, the idea of introducing this plan in the public schools receives a higher approval vote.

Why Do Families Move to the Suburbs?

One of the most pronounced changes in America is the continued shift of population from the inner cities to the suburbs. Are the residents of big cities moving to suburbia because of the schools, the crime and drug problems, or what? If it is primarily to obtain a better education, then, in theory at least, the shift in population might be halted by improvement in the quality of city schools.

To discover the reasons, an open question was framed that offered respondents freedom to answer in terms of the motivations of other people, but which actually can be presumed to fit their own thinking.

Interestingly, education does not emerge as the prime motive. In fact, it is relatively far down the list, even with parents of school children.

The reasons most often cited for this population shift largely concern congestion – the desire to escape to places less affected by the pollution and crowded living conditions found in large cities.

Other studies have shown that the century-old trend from country to city has been reversed, and that the public not only wants to move from large cities to suburban areas, but from medium-size cities to smaller cities, and from smaller cities to the open countryside.

Parents of children now in the public schools give the following reasons for the shift from the big cities to the suburban communities, listed in order of mention:

1. Congestion/noise/pollution
2. Fear of crime
3. To get away from minorities
4. More desirable housing
5. Better educational opportunities

Professional educators, on the other hand, rate education higher on their list of reasons why people are moving from the big cities to the suburbs.

The Importance of Education to Success

For decades the American public has regarded education as the royal road to success. There is little evidence that this attitude is changing, despite some current theories that genetics and home environment are the controlling factors. The group that shows most evidence of growing doubt is the group made up of professional educators. Some of their disillusionment can be explained, perhaps, by the lack of interest on the part of some students who stay in school only because the law requires it.

The question:

How important are schools to one's future suc-

cess – extremely important, fairly important, not too important?

	National Totals	No Children In School	Public School Parents	Private School Parents	Professional Educators
N=	1,627	928	620	124	306
	%	%	%	%	%
Extremely important	76	71	81	84	69
Fairly important	19	22	16	13	28
Not too important	4	5	2	2	2
No opinion	1	2	--	1	1
	100	100	99*	100	100

*Due to rounding

When asked if their feelings had changed over the years about the importance of education, only one in five replied in the affirmative. However, in the case of professional educators the proportion is nearly three in 10, and among this group the majority feel that education is *less important* today. By contrast, fewer members of the general public say their views on the importance of education have changed. Of those whose views have changed, the great majority say it has been to *strengthen* their belief in education as a key to one's future success.

Is Education Better or Worse Than in Your Day?

Solid agreement is registered by all groups on the question of whether children today get a better education than their parents did. The answer is "better" by a substantial margin. Those who are in a position to be best informed – those parents who have one or more children in the public schools – vote more than 3 to 1 that schools are better today than in their time. Even those who report that in *recent* years their attitudes have become less favorable are still inclined to say that the schools are better than they were when they attended.

The question:

As you look on your own elementary and high school education, is it your impression that children today get a better – or worse – education than you did?

	National Totals	No Children In School	Public School Parents	Private School Parents	Professional Educators
N=	1,627	928	620	124	306
	%	%	%	%	%
Better	61	56	69	62	67
Worse	20	22	17	23	16
No difference	11	13	9	8	11
No opinion	8	9	5	7	6
	100	100	100	100	100

When asked to give reasons why they think children today get a better – or worse – education than in earlier years, those who have children now in the public schools gave these reasons, which are listed in order of mentions:

1. Wider variety of subjects offered
2. Better facilities/equipment
3. Better teaching methods
4. Better qualified teachers
5. Equal opportunities for all students

When those who say that education today is inferior to that received in earlier years, the reasons offered for this view are:

1. Less discipline
2. Lower education standards and requirements
3. Less interest on the part of students
4. Less interest on the part of teachers
5. Too many irrelevant subjects offered

Detailed and different breakdowns of some of the responses to 1973 poll questions are provided in this section as a supplement to tables already presented.

The Major Problems

What do you think are the biggest problems with which the *public* schools in this community must deal?

	National Totals	No Children In School	Public School Parents	Private School Parents	Professional Educators
N=	1,627	928	620	124	306
	%	%	%	%	%
Lack of discipline	22	20	24	32	24
Integration/ segregation	18	22	14	15	19
Lack of proper financial support	16	14	20	10	35
Difficulty in getting "good" teachers	13	9	16	21	8
Use of drugs	10	11	8	12	4
Size of school/classes	9	7	10	17	13
Poor curriculum	7	7	7	10	16
Lack of proper facilities	4	3	5	4	9
Parents' lack of interest	4	4	5	2	11
School board policies	4	4	5	2	5
Pupils' lack of interest	3	4	2	2	9
Communication problems	1	1	1	1	3
Transportation	–	–	–	–	–
There are no problems	4	3	6	2	2
Miscellaneous	4	3	5	3	7
Don't know	13	16	7	8	1

What's Right with the Schools?

In your own opinion, in what ways are your local *public* schools particularly good?

	National Totals	No Children In School	Public School Parents	Private School Parents	Professional Educators
N=	1,627	928	620	124	306
	%	%	%	%	%
The curriculum	26	21	34	28	34
The teachers	23	17	32	23	38

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School facilities	8	7	9	7	16
Extracurricular activities	7	7	6	5	7
Up-to-date teaching methods	5	5	6	4	15
No racial conflicts	4	4	3	1	5
Good administration	4	3	4	4	8
Small school/classes	3	3	3	2	8
Good student-teacher relationships	3	3	3	3	3
Equal opportunity for all	3	4	1	4	5
Parental interest/participation	2	2	3	2	7
Good discipline	2	2	3	3	3
Close to home	1	1	1	1	–
Good lunch program	1	1	2	2	1
Kids are kept off the street	1	1	1	–	1
Transportation system	–	–	–	–	–
Nothing is good	6	5	6	15	4
Miscellaneous	2	1	2	1	2
Don't know	28	37	15	22	4

Changes in Attitudes in Recent Years

The basic table indicating whether public attitudes toward the schools have become more or less favorable appears earlier. The following table provides a different kind of breakdown: by city size and area of the country.

Overall Attitude Toward Schools

	Percent Totals	More Favorable	Less Favorable	No Change	Don't Know
	100	32	36	23	9
	%	%	%	%	%
City Size					
500,000 and over	100	28	37	26	9

50,000 to 499,999	100	30	44	20	6
25,000 to 49,999	100	48	27	21	5
Under 25,000	100	33	32	24	11
Area of Country					
East	100	27	37	26	10
Midwest	100	35	34	22	9
South	100	34	35	23	8
West	100	30	41	23	6

The table below indicates sources of school information identified by *those who said their opinions about school quality have changed in recent years.* It supplements the earlier table reporting attitude changes of all respondents.

Attitude Change in Recent Years

	National Totals	More Favorable	Less Favorable	No Change	Don't Know
	N= 1,627	515	589	380	143
	%	%	%	%	%
Sources of information					
Newspapers	38	40	38	38	36
Radio and/or television	20	19	24	19	17
Students	43	45	47	41	23
School board/ faculty	33	40	31	33	15
Parents of students	33	35	36	32	23
Other adults in community	23	23	24	22	17
Other	12	13	14	10	6
PTA	3	5	2	3	2
Undesignated	4	2	2	3	20

Are High Schools Getting Too Large?

Responses to the question of ideal size for high schools were reported earlier. A different kind of breakdown is presented below.

Size of Today's Schools

	Percent Totals	Getting Too Large	Not Large Enough	Just Right	Don't Know
	100 %	57 %	13 %	15 %	15 %
City Size					
500,000 and over	100	58	11	14	17
50,000 to 499,999	100	57	12	17	14
25,000 to 49,999	100	56	15	17	12
Under 25,000	100	56	15	14	15

Money Spent Related to Student Achievement

The public's perception of the effects on pupil achievement of different school spending levels was treated earlier. Here is a different kind of breakdown, suggesting that the higher the respondent's education level, the more likely he is to believe that additional money spent on the schools will improve student achievement.

Additional Expenditure of Money Helps

	Percent Totals	Great Deal	Little	None	Don't Know
	100 %	39 %	38 %	10 %	13 %
Education					
Elementary grades	100	24	35	13	28
High school incomplete	100	39	39	12	10
High school complete	100	39	42	9	28
Technical, trade, or business	100	28	43	15	14
College incomplete	100	48	33	8	11
College graduate	100	48	38	5	9

More Emphasis to Career Education

Respondents who agreed that career education should receive more emphasis in school – and this included 90% of the total (see earlier table) – were asked, "When should this education begin?" Their answers:

	National Totals	No Children In School	Public School Parents	Private School Parents	Professional Educators
N=	1,464	833	561	110	276
	%	%	%	%	%
During elementary school	21	21	21	23	40
During junior and senior high school	76	75	77	77	59
Don't know	3	3	2	--	1
	100	99*	100	100	100

*Due to rounding

Alternative Schools

People in cities of medium size seem particularly favorable to the alternative schools idea:

Establishment of New Kinds of Schools

	Percent Totals	Good Idea	Poor Idea	Don't Know
	100	62	26	12
	%	%	%	%
City Size				
500,000 and over	100	65	22	13
50,000 to 499,999	100	65	26	9
25,000 to 49,999	100	74	14	12
Under 25,000	100	57	30	13

Attitudes Toward School Integration

Responses to the integration question by various categories are shown below. The importance of integration to nonwhite respondents and to the young is apparent. Regional differences appear to be less pronounced than they once were.

School Integration

	Percent Totals	More Should Be Done	Less Should Be Done	No Change	Don't Know
	100 %	30 %	38 %	23 %	9 %
Sex/race					
Men	100	30	37	25	8
Women	100	30	39	21	10
White	100	26	42	23	9
Nonwhite	100	58	12	23	7
Age					
18 to 20 years	100	46	34	15	5
21 to 29 years	100	42	35	19	4
30 to 49 years	100	31	37	24	8
50 years and older	100	21	42	25	12
Religion					
Protestant	100	27	41	24	8
Roman Catholic	100	34	35	22	9
Jewish	100	35	29	26	10
All others	100	41	32	18	9
Region					
East	100	36	33	22	9
Midwest	100	25	39	27	9
South	100	28	42	20	10
West	100	33	37	22	8
Community size					
500,000 and over	100	37	36	21	6
50,000 to 499,999	100	26	44	23	7
25,000 to 49,999	100	36	27	26	11
Under 25,000	100	26	38	24	12
Education					
Elementary grades	100	24	34	25	17
High school incomplete	100	26	38	26	10
High school complete	100	27	41	22	9
Technical, trade, or business	100	35	46	16	3
College incomplete	100	35	41	19	5
College graduate	100	40	31	24	5
Occupation					
Business and professional	100	35	38	22	5
Clerical and sales	100	33	39	20	7
Farm	100	19	43	28	10
Skilled labor	100	25	42	24	9
Unskilled labor	100	35	31	25	9
Non-labor force	100	23	42	22	13
Undesignated	100	37	31	13	19

Income					
$15,000 and over	100	29	40	25	6
$10,000 to $14,999	100	30	40	22	8
$ 7,000 to $ 9,999	100	31	41	21	7
$ 5,000 to $ 6,999	100	32	38	23	7
$ 4,000 to $ 4,999	100	30	33	22	15
$ 3,000 to $ 3,999	100	21	31	31	17
Under $3,000	100	34	37	19	10
Undesignated	100	25	21	21	33

Why Do Families Move to the Suburbs?

The question and a detailed breakdown of the responses follow:

> **As you know, many families living in the big cities of the nation are moving to the suburbs. Why, in your opinion, are they doing this?**

	National Totals	No Children In School	Public School Parents	Private School Parents	Professional Educators
	N= 1,627	928	620	124	306
	%	%	%	%	%
Reasons for Moving					
Big-city congestion*	37	37	37	42	23
Fear of high crime level	24	24	23	23	28
Less pollution*	17	16	18	18	14
To get away from minorities	14	14	14	15	29
Better educational opportunities	12	12	12	19	27
More open spaces	11	10	12	10	12
More desirable housing	11	9	13	19	12
Better environment for children	9	8	10	8	8
Cities are too noisy	7	8	6	5	5
High city taxes	6	6	4	9	5
Deterioration of the big cities	4	3	4	7	4

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*Combined in summary, page 166.

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Lack of privacy	3	4	3	1	1
To create friendships	3	3	2	4	3
Improve one's standard of living	3	3	4	3	7
Lower rental costs	2	2	1	2	1
Lower cost of living in suburbs	2	3	2	1	3
Better employment opportunities	1	1	1	1	2
Children get in more trouble in cities	1	2	1	3	1
Drug problem	1	2	1	2	3
Status symbol	1	1	1	1	5
Miscellaneous	4	4	4	4	8
Don't know	6	6	5	4	–

The Importance of Education to Success

Differential responses by various categories to the question concerning the relation of schooling and success appear below.

		Importance of Schooling				
		Percent Totals	Extremely Important	Fairly Important	Not Too Important	No Opinion
	N=	100 %	76 %	19 %	4 %	2 %
Sex/race						
Men		100	72	21	5	2
Women		100	79	18	3	–
White		100	74	20	4	2
Nonwhite		100	84	13	–	2
Age						
18 to 20 years		100	63	34	3	–
21 to 29 years		100	72	22	5	1

30 to 49 years	100	79	18	2	1
50 years and older	100	75	17	5	3
Religion					
Protestant	100	78	18	3	1
Roman Catholic	100	74	21	3	2
Jewish	100	79	18	3	–
All others	100	63	24	8	5
Region					
East	100	74	20	5	1
Midwest	100	76	19	4	1
South	100	78	18	2	2
West	100	74	20	5	1
Community size					
500,000 and over	100	77	19	3	1
50,000 to 499,999	100	75	19	6	–
25,000 to 49,999	100	76	22	1	1
Under 25,000	100	75	20	3	2
Education					
Elementary grades	100	72	20	4	4
High school incomplete	100	73	19	7	1
High school complete	100	81	16	2	1
Technical, trade, or business	100	82	15	2	1
College incomplete	100	71	23	4	2
College graduate	100	71	23	4	2
Occupation					
Business and professional	100	73	22	3	2
Clerical and sales	100	79	16	3	2
Farm	100	77	17	3	3
Skilled labor	100	77	19	3	1
Unskilled labor	100	76	19	4	1
Non-labor force	100	73	20	4	3
Undesignated	100	80	9	7	4
Income					
$15,000 and over	100	75	20	4	1
$10,000 to $14,999	100	79	18	2	1
$7,000 to $9,999	100	76	19	3	2
$5,000 to $6,999	100	78	17	3	2
$4,000 to $4,999	100	70	22	4	4
$3,000 to $3,999	100	77	16	4	3
Under $3,000	100	67	22	5	6
Undesignated	100	71	17	10	2

Is Education Better or Worse Than in Your Day?

Additional breakdowns of the response to a question concerning the quality of education, past compared with present, appear below.

		Today's Education				
	Percent Totals	Better	Worse	No Difference	Better/Worse	Don't Know
N=	100	61	20	11	3	5
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Sex/race						
Men	100	60	21	11	2	6
Women	100	61	20	11	4	4
White	100	61	21	11	3	4
Nonwhite	100	59	17	14	3	7
Age						
18 to 20 years	100	57	16	22	1	4
21 to 29 years	100	58	22	11	2	7
30 to 49 years	100	67	18	9	3	3
50 years and older	100	56	23	11	3	7
Religion						
Protestant	100	62	20	10	4	4
Roman Catholic	100	62	20	12	1	5
Jewish	100	53	29	15	--	3
All others	100	52	24	13	2	9
Region						
East	100	59	22	11	2	6
Midwest	100	61	20	13	3	3
South	100	66	17	10	2	5
West	100	54	25	11	3	7
Community size						
500,000 and over	100	56	23	13	2	7
50,000 to 499,999	100	63	21	10	2	4
25,000 to 49,999	100	66	12	10	7	5
Under 25,000	100	62	19	10	3	5
Education						
Elementary grades	100	62	17	10	2	9
High school incomplete	100	57	23	11	3	6
High school complete	100	62	20	12	3	3
Technical, trade, or business	100	56	25	10	2	7
College incomplete	100	62	18	13	3	4
College graduate	100	60	24	10	3	3

Occupation						
Business and professional	100	64	17	12	4	3
Clerical and sales	100	63	22	9	3	3
Farm	100	58	23	12	3	4
Skilled labor	100	65	19	10	2	4
Unskilled labor	100	61	20	12	2	5
Non-labor force	100	51	26	12	2	9

Ways in Which Today's Education Is Better

An earlier table shows that 61% of all respondents thought elementary and secondary school children today get a better education than the respondents themselves did. Asked in what ways the schools are now better, they replied as follows:

	National Totals	No Children In School	Public School Parents	Private School Parents	Professional Educators
	N= 1,627	928	620	124	306
	%	%	%	%	%
Better					
Wider variety of subjects offered	33	30	38	35	37
Better facilities/ equipment	21	19	25	19	26
Better qualified teachers	13	13	12	10	21
Up-to-date teaching methods*	11	10	12	15	9
Less structured teaching*	4	4	4	5	14
Equal opportunities for all	3	3	3	2	2
Special help available	1	--	2	2	5
Educational system is better (general)	1	1	1	1	-
Miscellaneous	2	2	3	1	4
Don't know	2	2	2	2	1

*Combined in earlier table as "better teaching methods."

Those who answered that education is worse today gave these reasons:

	National Totals	No Children In School	Public School Parents	Private School Parents	Professional Educators
N=	1,627	928	620	124	306
	%	%	%	%	%
Worse					
Less discipline	7	8	7	5	7
Educational requirements are lower	5	5	4	3	5
Lack of student interest	4	5	3	4	4
Lack of interest by teachers	3	3	3	5	1
Too many irrelevant subjects offered	3	3	3	3	1
Lack of qualified teachers	2	2	3	2	1
Larger school, classes too large	2	3	2	3	3
Too many educational experiments	1	1	1	1	2
Poor student/teacher relationships	--	--	1	1	-
Educational system is worse (general)	--	--	--	2	-
Miscellaneous	2	2	1	4	3
Don't know	--	1	--	1	1

Analysis of Respondents

National Adults

No children in school	57%
Public school parents	38%*
Parochial and private school parents	8%*

*Totals exceed 43% because some parents have children attending more than one kind of school.

A key element in making comparisons with earlier years is to keep constant the number of persons with *no children* *in school.* This has been done by a simple weighting process carried out by the computer.

Sex	%
Men	49
Women	51
	100
Race	
White	88
Nonwhite	12
	100
Age	
18-20 years	5
21-29 years	18
30-49 years	40
50 years and over	37
	100
Religion	
Protestant	61
Roman Catholic	27
Jewish	2
Others	10
	100
Region	
East	27
Midwest	28
South	27
West	18
	100
Community size	
500,000 and over	31
50,000 to 499,999	25
25,000 to 49,999	4
Under 25,000	40
	100
Education	
Elementary grades	15
High school incomplete	17
High school complete	33
Technical, trade, or business school	6
College incomplete	16
College graduate	13
	100

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Occupation	
Business and professional	25
Clerical and sales	10
Farm	4
Skilled labor	20
Unskilled labor	20
Non-labor force	18
Undesignated	3
	100
Income	
$15,000 and over	25
$10,000 – $14,999	26
$ 7,000 – $ 9,999	15
$ 5,000 – $ 6,999	13
$ 4,000 – $ 4,999	6
$ 3,000 – $ 3,999	5
Under $2,999	8
Undesignated	2
	100

Chapter 7

Sixth Annual Gallup Poll of Public Attitudes Toward Education — 1974

Purpose of the Study

The present survey is the sixth annual survey sponsored by CFK Ltd. The series has sought to measure and to record the attitudes of citizens of the nation in respect to their public schools.

Each year effort has been made to probe opinions on those issues which seem to be of greatest concern to educators and to the general public. The six-year record thus reflects the changing problems that confront schools.

To assure that the survey did embrace areas of major interest, the staff of CFK Ltd. sought guidance from leading educators of the nation. This year the group included T.H. Bell, superintendent, Granite School District, Salt Lake City, Utah; Earl W. Brakken, superintendent, Independent School District 381, Lake County, Two Harbors, Minn.; B. Frank Brown, division director, I/D/E/A, Melbourne, Fla.; George L. Brown, executive director, Metro Denver Urban Coalition, Denver, Colo., and member, Colorado State Senate; Ramon C. Cortines, superintendent, Pasadena Unified School District, Pasadena, Calif.; Stanley M. Elam, editor, *Phi Delta Kappan*, Bloomington, Ind.; William J. Ellena, superintendent, Charlottesville Public Schools, Charlottesville, Va.; Ernest Jones, deputy superintendent, St. Louis Public Schools, St. Louis, Mo.; Richard Koeppe, superintendent, Cherry Creek School District, Denver, Colo.; and William Maynard, principal, Cleveland High School, Seattle Public Schools, Seattle, Wash.

The staffs of CFK Ltd. and the Gallup organization thank the participants cited above for their valuable suggestions.

Research Procedure

The Sample. As in earlier studies, the sample used in this survey is described as a modified probability sample of the nation. A total of 1,702 adults (18 years and older) comprised the cross-section. Personal interviewing was conducted in all areas of the nation and in proportion to population size. A total of 335 interviewers in as many areas – selected by strict random sampling techniques – took part in the survey.

This year a separate survey was undertaken to gather views of high school juniors and seniors. The sample consisted of 250 students, one young man or woman selected in this number of the interviewing areas described above. Since this sample is relatively small, greater allowance must obviously be made for variation due to sample size. Many of the same questions asked of the adults were asked of these students. Therefore, comparisons can be made of their views and those of the general public.

Time of Interviewing. The field work for the present survey was carried out during the period of May 10 through May 12, 1974.

All questions suggested for the survey went through a screening process. Early in the year a questionnaire was prepared and pretested with typical citizens. Five such tests were undertaken before the interviewing form employed in the national study was sent to the nationwide interviewing organization maintained by the Gallup group.

It is essential to point out that findings apply to the nation as a whole and not to any state or local community. Local surveys, employing the same questions, can be made to determine how any single community compares with the national norm.

A report of how different groups within the population responded to certain questions is included in the findings, particularly when statistical breakdowns by groups shed additional light on the public's thinking.

Major Problems Confronting The Public Schools in 1974

Lack of discipline in the public schools again heads the list of problems cited most often by survey respondents. Discipline has, in fact, been named the number one problem of the schools in five of the last six years. New evidence of its importance comes from the special survey of high school juniors and seniors. An even higher percentage of this group names discipline as the leading problem faced by the local schools.

No statistically significant change is found in the problems cited in 1973 and those in 1974, although there are a few changes in the ranking of the first 10 problems. Here, in order of mentions, are the first 10 for the year 1974:

1. Lack of discipline
2. Integration/segregation problems
3. Lack of proper financial support
4. Use of drugs
5. Difficulty of getting "good" teachers
6. Size of school/classes
7. Parents' lack of interest
8. School board policies
9. Poor curriculum
10. Lack of proper facilities

It is noteworthy that three of the top four problems relate in various ways to the problem of student behavior – the kind of trouble that makes the front pages of the newspapers. In fact, slightly more than half of all mentions fall into this category, as opposed to mentions of concerns traditionally associated with education and the schools.

Students themselves name the same three problems: discipline, racial problems, and drug use.

Crime Within the School

Those who participated in the planning of the present survey expressed the concern that a growing problem within the school is crime. Two questions, therefore, were added to the present study to determine the impressions of the public in this matter.

The first question asked:

From what you have heard or read, is it your impression that stealing (money, clothes, lunches,

books, etc.) goes on a great deal, some, or very little in the local public schools?

The second question asked:

> **Are student gangs that disrupt the school or bother other students a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem in the local public schools?**

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %	High School Juniors & Seniors %
Stealing					
Goes on a great deal	33	30	35	50	37
Some	34	31	39	29	47
Very little	15	13	18	5	15
Don't know/ no answer	18	26	8	16	1
Student Gangs					
Yes, a big problem	17	18	14	21	14
Somewhat of a problem	31	29	33	36	40
Not a problem	32	26	44	28	45
Don't know/ no answer	20	27	9	15	1

The findings are disturbing, and suggest that something must be done if the public's confidence and respect for the school is to remain at a high level. Critics will almost certainly point to the schools as a breeding ground for crime and violence and for future Watergates.

Analysis of the finding by areas of the nation and by size of city sheds further light on the problem of crime within the schools.

The question:

> **From what you have heard or read, is it your impression that stealing (money, clothes, lunches, books, etc.) goes on a great deal, some, or very little in the local *public* schools?**

	Great Deal %	Some %	Very Little %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
NATIONAL	33	34	15	18
Sex				
Men	29	35	17	19
Women	36	34	12	18
Race				
White	32	36	14	18
Nonwhite	35	26	21	18
Education				
Elementary grades	31	25	20	24
High school	34	33	15	18
College	31	42	12	15
Region				
East	31	33	16	20
Midwest	31	39	14	16
South	30	32	16	22
West	40	31	13	16
Community Size				
500,000 and over	38	32	12	18
50,000 to 499,999	35	37	13	15
2,500 to 49,999	33	35	12	20
Under 2,500	23	34	22	21

Are student gangs that disrupt the school or bother other students a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem in the local *public* schools?

	Big Problem %	Somewhat Of a Problem %	Not a Problem %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
NATIONAL	17	31	32	20
Sex				
Men	18	29	35	18
Women	16	33	31	20
Race				
White	15	31	34	20
Nonwhite	26	28	28	18
Education				
Elementary grades	21	27	29	23
High school	19	31	31	19
College	12	32	38	18
Region				
East	18	30	35	17
Midwest	14	34	33	19
South	14	31	34	21
West	23	29	27	21

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Community Size				
500,000 and over	23	32	26	19
50,000 to 499,999	21	39	21	19
2,500 to 49,999	14	29	34	23
Under 2,500	7	23	51	19
Central city	30	38	12	20
Central city suburbs	15	32	35	18
Non-central cities	10	25	45	20

What To Do with the Noninterested Student

Important in dealing with discipline is the question of what to do with the student who is not interested in school work and who, consequently, is prone to be a troublemaker. Many educators have suggested that such students be permitted to leave school rather than waste their time — and that of other students — by remaining in school.

The public has not accepted this point of view, chiefly because no agency is prepared to take responsibility for those released from school.

The main question:

> **Some students have no interest in school work as now offered in junior and senior high school and they become a problem. Here are some ways that have been proposed for dealing with these students. Will you tell me in the case of each proposal whether or not you approve of it?**

The subquestion:

Permit these students to quit school?

	National Totals %
Approve	18
Disapprove	78
No answer	4
	100

When the same question was put to the special sample of high school juniors and seniors, a significantly different response was obtained. More than twice as many high school juniors and seniors would permit a student to quit school — 44%, to be exact. Moreover, 22% of those interviewed say they would prefer to take a full-time job rather than to continue in school.

The question:

> **If you could get a good full-time job, would you prefer taking the job or would you prefer to continue going to school?**

	High School Juniors & Seniors %
Prefer full-time job	22
Prefer to continue school	78
	100

The burden, therefore, rests with the school to develop ways to deal with this problem. In the present survey, five different proposals for dealing with these students were offered – in addition to one which would permit the student to quit school. Interestingly, the public approves of each of the five proposals by a heavy majority.

Of the five proposals offered, the one receiving the highest favorable vote calls for special courses which would train students for jobs.

Another plan that both students and their elders favor offers a middle ground. This plan would have "business and industries" provide on-the-job training as a substitute for regular school. Presumably, under this plan the school would keep a close check on the student.

A plan that would offer a work-study program with one-half day spent in school and the other half at training on the job produces a favorable response from 86% of the general public, 90% of high school juniors and seniors.

Giving school credit for volunteer work done during the school day – with an approved organization, such as a local hospital, day-care center, and the like – appeals to a large majority, as do special school programs designed especially for students with out-of-the-ordinary interests and talents.

The conclusion that seems warranted, at least from the public's viewpoint, is that the schools of the nation have a green light to devise programs that will permit high school students to spend a great deal of their time outside the school with on-the-job training or doing the kind of volunteer work that will lead to a job. But the schools must be responsible for executing the plan and seeing to it that students don't use the plan as a way of escaping from work – either in school or on the job.

The main question:

Some students have no interest in school work as now offered in junior and senior high school and they become a problem. Here are some ways that have been proposed for dealing with these students. Will you tell me in the case of each proposal whether or not you approve of it?

The subquestion:

Have businesses and industries provide on-the-job training as a substitute for regular school.

	National Totals %	High School Juniors & Seniors %
Approve	74	82
Disapprove	21	14
Don't know/no answer	5	4
	100	100

The subquestion:

Have special training courses which would prepare them for jobs.

	National Totals %	High School Juniors & Seniors %
Approve	94	97
Disapprove	4	1
Don't know/no answer	2	2
	100	100

The subquestion:

Have a work-study program (½ day at school, ½ day on-the-job training).

	National Totals %	High School Juniors & Seniors %
Approve	86	90
Disapprove	9	10
Don't know/no answer	5	
	100	100

The subquestion:

Give school credit for volunteer work during the school day with an approved organization such as a local hospital, day-care center, and the like.

	National Totals %	High School Juniors & Seniors %
Approve	77	83
Disapprove	17	15
Don't know/no answer	6	2
	100	100

The subquestion:

Have separate programs for students with out-of-the-ordinary interests and talents.

	National Totals %	High School Juniors & Seniors %
Approve	79	83
Disapprove	14	13
Don't know/no answer	7	4
	100	100

Automatic Promotion

The policy of automatic promotion finds little support throughout the nation. A slightly higher percentage of high school juniors and seniors than adults support this idea, but even among this group only 10% favor automatic promotion as opposed to 87% who favor a plan that would require a student to repeat courses that he failed but permit him to go on to the next year in the subjects that he passed.

The question:

Some students are not able to keep up with their classmates and therefore fail their work. Which of these two ways of dealing with this problem do you prefer?

	National Totals %	High School Juniors & Seniors %
Automatic promotion	7	10
Repeat failed courses	90	87
No opinion	3	3
	100	100

How To Handle the Recalcitrant Student

While the noninterested student poses a special problem, what to do with the recalcitrant student presents a more vexing discipline issue. Complicating matters, the courts and school boards have set guidelines in many communities, with the result that teachers and administrators are at a loss to know how to deal with a student who consistently refuses to obey orders. Obviously, disciplinary action must take account of community attitudes.

With this fact in mind, an effort was made in the present study to gain some insight into the public's views. The question was posed: "What should be done with a high school student who refuses to obey his teachers?"

Oddly enough, parents of school children and high school juniors and seniors take a more punitive attitude than do persons who have no children in school. Slightly more than half (57%) of the parents of school children interviewed said they would expel the student, see that he spent extra time in school, or recommended that he be paddled. Those who opted for a type of rehabilitation ("counsel," "work-study program," "change of teachers or courses," "transfer to another school," "discussions with teachers and principals," "involvement of parents," and similar remedial measures) constitute 59%.

Participation in Sports by Girls

A majority of the general public sees nothing wrong with permitting girls to participate in noncontact sports on the same teams with boys. Noncontact sports, our interviewers explained, are such sports as track, tennis, golf, baseball, and the like.

Moreover, the public votes favorably (88%) on giving girls' athletics the same kind of financial support as that given boys.

High school juniors and seniors are even more in favor of allowing girls to participate in noncontact sports on the same teams with boys than their elders.

The question:

Should girls be permitted to participate in noncontact sports — track, tennis, golf, baseball and the like — on the same teams with boys?

	National Totals %	High School Juniors & Seniors %
Yes, in favor	59	76
No, opposed	35	22
Don't know/no answer	6	2
	100	100

Educational Innovation

Attitudes toward innovations being introduced in the local schools have been probed in four national CFK Ltd. surveys. In two surveys questions have measured a generalized view about innovations; in two other surveys questions were designed to reflect the public's attitudes about changes that have actually been effected in the local schools.

The two approaches bring almost identical results for the nation as a whole. At the same time, it should be emphasized that findings would almost certainly vary from community to community. In the present survey this question was asked:

> **Do you feel that the local public schools are not interested enough in trying new ways and methods or are they too ready to try new ideas?**

The results, compared with 1970, the last time this same question was asked, show a slight shift. In the earlier survey, 20% reported that the local schools were "not interested enough," 21% said they were "too ready" to try new ideas. A total of 32% said the schools were "just about right" in this respect and 27% had no opinion.

In the present survey, 24% say they believe the schools are not interested enough in trying new ways and methods, 20% say they are too ready, 32% say the position of the schools in this respect is "about right," and 24% have no opinion.

Examination of the findings by groups points to interesting differences. Parents with children in the public schools are more inclined to say that the schools are *too ready* to try new ideas. The two other major groups, those without children in the schools and parents of children in parochial/private schools, are inclined to say the schools are *not interested enough* in new ways and methods. High school juniors and seniors, interviewed in the present study, are far more likely to complain that the schools are not interested enough in new ideas.

The question:

> **Do you feel that the local *public* schools are not interested enough in trying new ways and methods or are they too ready to try new ideas?**

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %	High School Juniors & Seniors %
Not interested enough	24	25	21	26	48
Too ready to try new ideas	20	17	26	23	13
Just about right	32	25	42	27	34
Don't know/ no answer	24	33	11	24	5
	100	100	100	100	100

Teacher Tenure

With the supply of teachers now greater than the demand in many regions and specialties, pressures on local schools to change policies regarding tenure have increased. The general public has generally opposed the principle of tenure, although, judging from the most recent survey, the margin has narrowed.

The same tenure question asked in the present survey was included in a comparable survey in 1972. An increase of three percentage points in the number favoring tenure was found in the present study, and a decline of five percentage points in those opposed.

The question:

> **Most public school teachers have tenure; that is, after a two- or three-year trial period they receive what amounts to a lifetime contract. Do you approve or disapprove of this policy?**

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Approve	31	32	31	34
Disapprove	56	52	61	59
Don't know/ no answer	13	16	8	7
	100	100	100	100

Information About the Schools

Parents of children in the public schools and in parochial/private schools would like to have more information about the schools in the community. Current journalistic practice in most parts of the nation is to give preference to "hard" news, that is, to events or happenings that usually relate to vandalism, racial troubles, discipline problems, protests, teacher strikes, and similar news, which most laymen would describe as "bad" news.

In some cities reporters make a serious effort to find good news. The interest of parents, however, is in information which probably fits neither category, but which enables them to make better judgments about the schools and the education of their children. Newsletters from the school *may* be the only way to supply this need.

To discover the interest of the different groups in the schools, the present survey included this question:

Would you like to know more about the schools in this community?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes	54	45	64	61
No	38	44	31	34
Don't know/ no answer	8	11	5	5
	100	100	100	100

When those who answered yes were asked, "What kind of information would be of particular interest to you?" the responses, in order of frequency, were:

1. The curriculum
2. Qualifications of teachers
3. Current methods of teaching
4. How the schools are administered
5. The problem of discipline
6. The financial status of the schools
7. Extracurricular activities
8. Academic ratings of the schools
9. Student attitudes toward the schools
10. More information about "my child"
11. Handling of students with special problems
12. Information about the grading system

13. Problems of integration

14. How parents can become involved in school activities

Constitutional Amendments Affecting the Schools

Four suggested amendments to the U.S. Constitution deal with these matters: busing to achieve racial integration, equalization of funds to narrow the gap between schools in poor and well-to-do communities, government financial aid to parochial schools, and an amendment that would permit prayers to be said in the public schools.

If these amendments were made the subject of nationwide referenda at the present time, these majorities would likely be found:

1. An amendment to permit prayers: in favor 77%, opposed 17%, no opinion 6%.
2. An amendment to permit government financial aid to parochial schools: in favor 52%, opposed 35%, no opinion 13%.
3. An amendment to equalize amounts spent within a state on school children: in favor 66%, opposed 22%, no opinion 12%.
4. An amendment to forbid busing to achieve racial integration: in favor of busing 18%, opposed 72%, no opinion 10%.

Prayers in the Public Schools

This issue is a hardy perennial. The courts have consistently opposed any effort to breach church-state prohibitions now written into the Constitution. Earlier surveys on this issue have shown that a majority of the American people favor, by large majorities, permitting prayers in the schools.*

The question:

> **These proposals are being suggested to amend the U.S. Constitution. As I read each one, will you tell me if you favor or oppose it:**
>
> **An amendment to the Constitution that would permit prayers to be said in the public schools.**

	National Totals %	No Children In School %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Favor	77	75	79	78
Oppose	17	18	17	19
Don't know/ no answer	6	7	4	3
	100	100	100	100

*Supreme Court rulings actually prohibit only "official" prayers. – *The Editor*

Government Aid for Church-Related Schools

The Supreme Court has consistently ruled against government aid to church-related schools. Only an amendment to the Constitution can change this situation. Public sentiment in favor of government aid to parochial schools has been rather evenly divided in past surveys.

When this question was asked in the 1970 survey, "It has been proposed that some government tax money be used to help parochial schools make ends meet. How do you feel about this? Do you favor or oppose giving some government tax money to help parochial schools?" the findings were: in favor of aid 48%, opposed 44%, no opinion 8%.

The 1974 question:

> **Do you favor or oppose an amendment to the Constitution that would permit government financial aid to parochial schools?**

	National Totals %	No Children In School %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Favor	52	52	51	66
Oppose	35	35	37	26
Don't know/ no answer	13	13	12	8
	100	100	100	100

Equalization of Money Spent by School Districts

Americans have long professed to believe that all children ought to be given more or less equal opportunity for a basic education. But the system of financing the schools which has grown up in the U.S. does not effect this. For example, there is a spread of over $1,000 in the average cost of educating a pupil in New York State ($1,809) and in Alabama ($716), and differences among districts within many states are even greater.

In recent years several court cases challenging such financial unevenness have been considered. In 1973 the U.S. Supreme Court held, 5-4, that the U.S. Constitution in no way guarantees equality of educational opportunity, nor even that education is a "fundamental right" of children under our Constitution. This ruling has led some educators to advocate that a provision be added to the Constitution which would encourage nationwide equalization of expenditures between rich and poor districts. To elicit the public's views on this issue, the following question was asked:

At present some public school districts spend less than others per child in school. Would you favor or oppose a constitutional amendment to reduce these differences?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Favor	66	68	64	63
Oppose	22	17	27	27
Don't know/ no answer	12	15	9	10
	100	100	100	100

Busing to Achieve Racial Integration

This highly controversial issue has been debated for a number of years. Sentiment opposed to busing has remained surprisingly constant. For example, a survey on this issue conducted in 1971 by the Gallup Poll showed 76% of the nation's eligible voters opposed to busing and 18% in favor, with 6% having no opinion.

In other surveys it has been discovered that the public favors integration, but opposes busing of school children as a means to this end.

The question:

Do you favor busing of school children for the purpose of racial integration or should busing for this purpose be prohibited through a constitutional amendment?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Favor	18	19	17	22
Prohibit	72	70	75	66
Don't know/ no answer	10	11	8	12
	100	100	100	100

How the Public Schools Rate

The public schools represent one of the two or three American institutions which have held the respect and confidence of a majority of citizens in a period of widespread cynicism and disillusionment. To measure the quality of education available in the public schools in a new approach, this question was asked:

Students are often given the grades A,B,C,D, and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the *public* schools themselves, in this community, were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the public schools here – A,B,C,D, or FAIL?

Wide variations are found by segments of the population, but one comforting fact is that the people who probably know their local schools best – the parents of children in the public schools – give them the highest rating.

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %	High School Juniors & Seniors %
A rating	18	16	22	12	9
B rating	30	22	42	28	41
C rating	21	19	24	22	35
D rating	6	7	4	9	10
Fail	5	4	3	15	2
Don't know/ no answer	20	32	5	14	3
	100	100	100	100	100

The Public's Perceptions of a 'Good' School

Educators often ask how the public reaches a judgment that a school is "good." To shed light on the reasons, this question was asked:

> **If you could send a child of yours to any school in this area, to what school would you send him?**

Those who responded were then asked to tell exactly why they selected this school. Their answers, summarized, can be stated as follows:

The good school has . . . teachers who are interested in their work and in their students; teachers who make their classes interesting; enough variety in the curriculum to interest students who are not college-bound; good discipline, respect for authority; good student/teacher relationships; and good student-to-student relationships.

Many other things are mentioned: modern equipment, small classes, good administration, up-to-date teaching methods, religious training, etc.

Training for Citizenship

The failure of many young people to register and to vote in the presidential election of 1972 has led some critics to question the wisdom of letting young persons vote at the age of 18. Since the schools must bear much of the responsibility for preparing young people for citizenship, an important point arises as to whether high school juniors and seniors know enough about the Constitution, government, and the political process to enable them to cast a reasonably intelligent vote.

To obtain the views of the public — and of high school juniors and seniors themselves — this question was included in the survey:

The question:

> **Young people who reach the age of 18 now have the right to vote. The question arises as to whether high school courses give students enough information about the Constitution, about government and the political process, to enable them to vote intelligently. What is your impression — how good a job do the schools perform in this respect: good, fair, or poor?**

	National Totals %	No Children in Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %	High School Juniors & Seniors %
Good	33	28	39	38	47
Fair	33	32	35	36	34
Poor	16	18	13	15	16
Don't know/ no answer	18	22	13	11	3
	100	100	100	100	100

Time Spent on Four Activities by Better Versus Poorer Students

Parents who are concerned about their children's progress in school can gain some guidance from facts gathered in the survey indicating how students with higher grades spend their out-of-school hours in contrast to students with lower grades.

The time spent on four activities was recorded for a typical day: reading not connected with school work, homework, listening to radio, and viewing television. The results, when analyzed, show that students at the top of their class, and students with above-average grades, spend markedly more time reading for pleasure than do the poorer students.

Students at the top of their class actually devote nearly twice as much time to reading not connected with their school work as do the students in the lower half of their classes. Also, they spend more time on homework and far less time watching television.

This finding confirms the results reported in other studies made in the United States and Great Britain. Students who do less well in their school work tend to spend more time on television and less on reading than do the students at the top of their classes.

Persons who grew up in an earlier generation may be shocked by the small amount of time students of today spend on reading. And, judging from the information obtained from high school juniors and seniors, the years spent in school have little apparent effect in encouraging greater time spent in reading.

High school juniors and seniors in the upper half of their classes spent only 17 minutes, the median, on a given day reading for pleasure. Those in the lower half spent only five minutes. A total of 30% of those in the upper half read nothing not required; more than half (53%) of those in the lower half read nothing.

No significant differences were found in respect to radio listening. About the same percentage of all three groups listened, and the amount of time spent averaged about the same for those at the top as for those at the bottom.

The parents who want to see their children improve their grades might follow this time schedule for their out-of-school activities:

Reading for pleasure – 30 minutes to one hour
Doing homework – one hour
Listening to radio – 30 minutes to one hour
Viewing television – not more than one and one-half hours

The Most Important Things Juniors & Seniors Say They Are Getting Out of School

When high school juniors and seniors are asked this question,

What do you feel are the most important things *you* are getting out of school?

the answers that come up most frequently are "making friends," and "learning to get along with people." These reasons are cited even more often than "gaining a general education" or "preparing for a job after high school." Fourth in frequency of mentions is "preparation for college."

Very few students mention goals usually cited by educators: "personal development," "acquiring a sense of values," "widening one's outlook," "becoming more mature." Some students say they have developed a greater sense of responsibility, more self-reliance, and that they have learned to cope better with people and problems; but very few juniors and seniors say that the most important thing they are getting out of school is the development of their individual capabilities.

The Goals of Education as Seen by High School Juniors & Seniors

When high school juniors and seniors were asked, "What are the overall educational goals of the school you attend?" their answers fell chiefly into three categories:

1. To prepare students for college, 43%.
2. To prepare students for jobs, 25%.
3. To graduate students and get them out of school, 10%.

Few cite, as a goal of education, the development of the individual student.

Importance of College Education

The following question, asked of the high school juniors and seniors, provides interesting views when considered in the context of the many discussions during recent years of the "relevance of college education."

The question:

How important is a college education today: extremely important, fairly important, not too important, or not important at all?

	High School Juniors & Seniors
	%
Extremely	36
Fairly	51
Not too	10
Not at all	2
Don't know/no answer	1
	100

FURTHER BREAKDOWNS

Detailed and different breakdowns of some of the responses to 1974 poll questions are provided in this section as a supplement to tables already presented.

The Major Problems

What do you think are the biggest problems with which the *public* schools in this community must deal?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %	High School Juniors & Seniors %
Lack of discipline	23	21	25	29	32
Integration/segregation problems	16	17	14	17	14
Lack of proper financial support	13	11	15	17	9
Use of drugs	13	13	12	15	13
Difficulty of getting "good" teachers	11	10	13	15	11
Size of school/classes	6	4	9	8	8
Parents' lack of interest	6	6	6	4	2
School board policies	4	3	6	7	2
Poor curriculum	3	4	3	3	7
Lack of proper facilities	3	2	5	3	6
Pupils' lack of interest	2	2	2	*	14
Poor communication	*	*	1	1	4
Miscellaneous	4	3	6	7	3
There are no problems	3	3	3	·	2
Don't know/no answer	17	23	9	7	7

*Less than 1%

What to Do with the Noninterested Student

Some students have no interest in school work as now offered in junior and senior high school and they become a problem. Here are some ways that have been proposed for dealing with these students. Will you tell me in the case of each proposal whether or not you approve of it.

A. Permit these students to quit school.

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %	High School Juniors & Seniors %
Approve	18	21	14	12	44
Disapprove	78	74	82	84	53
Don't know/ no answer	4	5	4	4	3
	100	100	100	100	100

B. Have businesses and industries provide on-the-job training as a substitute for regular school.

Approve	74	77	70	67	82
Disapprove	21	17	26	31	14
Don't know/ no answer	5	6	4	2	4
	100	100	100	100	100

C. Have special training courses which would prepare them for jobs.

Approve	94	93	94	95	97
Disapprove	4	3	5	3	1
Don't know/ no answer	2	4	1	2	2
	100	100	100	100	100

D. Have a work-study program (½ day at school, ½ day on-the-job training).

Approve	86	85	89	86	90
Disapprove	9	9	9	12	10
Don't know/ no answer	5	6	2	2	*
	100	100	100	100	100

*Less than 1%

E. Give school credit for volunteer work during the school day with an approved organization, such as a local hospital, day-care center, and the like.

Approve	77	77	77	74	83
Disapprove	17	15	20	24	15
Don't know/ no answer	6	8	3	2	2
	100	100	100	100	100

F. Have separate programs for students with out-of-the-ordinary interests and talents.

Approve	79	76	82	82	83
Disapprove	14	14	13	15	13
Don't know/ no answer	7	10	5	3	4
	100	100	100	100	100

What would make school more interesting and useful to you?

	High School Juniors & Seniors %
Wider variety of subjects	35
Better/more interested teachers	14
Extracurricular activities	10
Freedom to choose courses	8
Better preparation for non-college students	8
Better facilities	6
More free time	6
Better student/teacher relationships	3
Open classrooms	2
Better relationships between students	1
Miscellaneous	6
Nothing – it's all right now	8
Don't know/no answer	10
	117*

*Totals exceed 100% due to multiple answers by respondents.

Automatic Promotion

Some students are not able to keep up with their classmates and therefore fail their work. Which of these two ways of dealing with this problem do you prefer?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %	High School Juniors & Seniors %
Promote them anyway	7	6	8	7	10
Hold them back	90	90	89	88	87
Don't know/ no answer	3	4	3	5	3
	100	100	100	100	100

How To Handle the Recalcitrant Student

What should be done with a high school student who refuses to obey his teachers?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %	High School Juniors & Seniors %
Punitive Action					
Suspend/expel	31	30	32	33	41
Punish	11	11	11	6	4
Detention time	4	3	6	5	8
Paddle	7	7	8	3	3
Rehabilitation					
Counsel	13	13	14	15	17
Provide work/ study program	1	1	1	2	2
Discussions with principal, teachers, juvenile authorities	8	8	7	9	18
Involve parents	22	19	26	30	13
Provide special curriculum/ teachers	10	9	11	12	3
Miscellaneous	3	3	2	*	6
Don't know/ no answer	10	12	7	11	7

*Less than 1%

Participation in Sports by Girls

Should girls be permitted to participate in non-

contact sports — track, tennis, golf, baseball, and the like — *on the same teams with boys?*

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %	High School Juniors & Seniors %
Yes	59	58	59	66	76
No	35	34	37	30	22
Don't know/ no answer	6	8	4	4	2
	100	100	100	100	100

Should girls have equal financial support for their athletic activities as boys?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %	High School Juniors & Seniors %
Yes	88	87	88	96	89
No	7	7	8	4	9
Don't know/ no answer	5	6	4		2
	100	100	100	100	100

Constitutional Amendments Affecting The Schools

These proposals are being suggested to amend the U.S. Constitution. As I read each one, will you tell me if you favor or oppose it?

A. An amendment to the Constitution that would permit prayers to be said in the public schools.

	Favor %	Oppose %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
NATIONAL	77	17	6
Sex			
Men	75	20	5
Women	80	15	5
Race			
White	77	18	5
Nonwhite	78	16	6
Education			
Elementary grades	84	9	7

High school	81	14	5
College	67	28	5
Age			
18 to 29 years	69	25	6
30 to 49 years	79	16	5
50 years and over	80	13	7
Religion			
Protestant	82	13	5
Roman Catholic	79	15	6
Jewish	34	61	5
All others	50	41	9
Region			
East	75	19	6
Midwest	77	17	6
South	86	10	4
West	68	26	6
Political affiliation			
Republican	81	13	6
Democrat	77	17	6
Independent	74	21	5

B. An amendment to the Constitution that would permit government financial aid to parochial schools.

	Favor %	Oppose %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
NATIONAL	52	35	13
Sex			
Men	50	39	11
Women	55	31	14
Race			
White	53	35	12
Nonwhite	50	29	21
Education			
Elementary grades	51	28	21
High school	56	31	13
College	48	44	8
Age			
18 to 29 years	56	33	11
30 to 49 years	54	35	11
50 years and over	50	35	15
Religion			
Protestant	44	41	15
Roman Catholic	76	15	9
Jewish	27	66	7
All others	39	48	13
Region			
East	59	30	11
Midwest	59	32	9
South	45	36	19
West	46	43	11

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Political affiliation			
Republican	49	39	12
Democrat	54	32	14
Independent	53	35	12

C. At present some public school districts spend less than others per child in school. Would you favor or oppose a constitutional amendment to reduce these differences?

	Favor %	Oppose %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
NATIONAL	66	22	12
Sex			
Men	66	24	10
Women	67	19	14
Race			
White	65	23	12
Nonwhite	75	13	12
Education			
Elementary grades	69	12	19
High school	66	21	13
College	65	28	7
Age			
18 to 29 years	73	17	10
30 to 49 years	64	27	9
50 years and over	65	19	16
Religion			
Protestant	65	22	13
Roman Catholic	67	22	11
Jewish	84	9	7
All others	71	18	11
Region			
East	64	20	16
Midwest	65	24	11
South	67	22	11
West	71	21	8
Political affiliation			
Republican	56	29	15
Democrat	71	18	11
Independent	67	22	11

D. Do you favor busing of school children for the purpose of racial integration or should busing for this purpose be prohibited through a constitutional amendment?

	Favor %	Prohibit %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
NATIONAL	18	72	10
Sex			
Men	19	73	8
Women	18	71	11
Race			
White	15	75	10
Nonwhite	40	47	13
Education			
Elementary grades	21	70	9
High school	15	75	10
College	22	67	11
Age			
18 to 29 years	22	67	11
30 to 49 years	16	74	10
50 years and over	18	72	10
Religion			
Protestant	16	75	9
Roman Catholic	19	70	11
Jewish	21	68	11
All others	30	55	15
Region			
East	17	70	13
Midwest	18	74	8
South	20	73	7
West	17	70	13
Political affiliation			
Republican	13	78	9
Democrat	22	69	9
Independent	16	72	12

How the Public Schools Rate

Students are often given the grades A,B,C,D, and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the *public* schools themselves, in this community, were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the public schools here – A,B,C,D, or FAIL?

	A %	B %	C %	D %	FAIL %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
NATIONAL	18	30	21	6	5	20
Sex						
Men	18	30	21	7	5	19
Women	18	30	20	6	4	22
Race						
White	18	30	21	6	4	21
Nonwhite	18	31	17	5	10	19

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Education						
Elementary grades	25	24	13	5	4	29
High school	19	28	22	6	4	21
College	13	38	22	7	4	16
Age						
18 to 24 years	11	24	34	10	4	17
25 to 29 years	18	29	20	9	4	20
30 to 49 years	18	37	21	5	5	14
50 years and over	21	24	17	5	4	29
Community size						
1 million and over	13	27	20	7	8	25
500,000 to 999,999	20	21	22	9	5	23
50,000 to 499,999	16	33	23	6	4	18
2,500 to 49,999	25	34	16	2	4	19
Under 2,500	18	31	21	6	3	21

If you could send a child of yours to *any* school in this area, to what school would you send him?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Replied	68	60	76	87
No reply given	18	26	8	10
There is no other school in area	14	14	16	3
	100	100	100	100

Training for Citizenship

Young people who reach the age of 18 now have the right to vote. The question arises as to whether high school courses give students enough information about the Constitution, about government and the political process to enable them to vote intelligently. What is your impression – how good a job do the schools perform in this respect – good, fair, or poor?

	Good %	Fair %	Poor %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
NATIONAL	33	33	16	18
Sex				
Men	32	34	18	16
Women	33	32	15	20
Race				
White	32	33	17	18
Nonwhite	38	32	14	16

Education				
Elementary grades	30	28	14	28
High school	34	33	16	17
College	33	36	17	14
Age				
18 to 29 years	33	37	19	11
30 to 49 years	38	32	14	16
50 years and over	28	31	17	24
Community size				
500,000 and over	29	34	18	19
50,000 to 499,999	37	34	12	17
2,500 to 49,999	39	29	15	17
Under 2,500	30	34	18	18

Time Spent on Four Activities by Better Versus Poorer Students

Is this child at the top of his/her class, above average, average, or below average in his/her grades? (Asked of parents, who responded for their oldest child in school)

Where do you stand academically in your class — near the top, above average, average, or below average? (Asked of high school juniors and seniors)

	Parents of School Children %	High School Juniors & Seniors %
Near top	20	23
Above average	34	30
Average	40	45
Below average	4	2
Don't know/no answer	2	*
	100	100

In reply to this question, "Thinking now about this child, how much time does this child spend in these various ways on a typical school day in the hours when he/she is not in school?," parents of public school children reported:

	None %	Minutes Spent (Median)	Minutes Spent (Mean)
AMOUNT OF TIME SPENT			
Reading Not Connected With Homework			

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Top of class	11	35	53
Above average	26	29	44
Lower half	34	20	28
Doing homework			
Top of class	15	57	68
Above average	22	40	57
Lower half	27	30	39
Looking at television			
Top of class	10	97	97
Above average	8	94	94
Lower half	9	127	145
Listening to radio			
Top of class	39	27	59
Above average	43	28	56
Lower half	40	29	53

In reply to this question, "Thinking only of the last school day, which you mentioned above, how much time did you spend?," high school juniors and seniors reported:

	None %	Minutes Spent (Median)	Minutes Spent (Mean)
AMOUNT OF TIME SPENT			
Reading Not Connected With Homework			
Top of class	30	17	29
Above average	53	5	24
Doing homework			
Top of class	32	30	52
Above average	43	29	44
Looking at television			
Top of class	31	50	80
Above average	23	100	102
Listening to radio			
Top of class	23	41	70
Above average	22	50	85

COMPOSITION OF THE SAMPLES

Adults

No children in schools	55%
Public school parents	39%*
Parochial school parents	8%*

*The combined total of public and parochial school parents exceeds 45% because some parents have children attending more than one kind of school.

High School Juniors and Seniors	
Public school students	92%
Parochial and private school students	8%

	All Adults %	High School Juniors & Seniors %
Sex		
Men	50	42
Women	50	58
	100	100
Race		
White	88	Did not query
Nonwhite	12	
	100	
Religion		
Protestant	60	Did not query
Roman Catholic	28	
Jewish	3	
Others	9	
	100	
Age		
18 to 24 years	11	
25 to 29 years	12	
30 to 49 years	40	
50 years and over	37	
	100	
Occupation		
Business and professional	23	Did not query
Clerical and sales	11	
Farm	4	
Skilled labor	19	
Unskilled labor	21	
Nonlabor force	20	
Undesignated	2	
	100	
Income		
$20,000 and over	15	Did not query
$15,000 to $19,999	15	
$10,000 to $14,999	26	
$7,000 to $9,999	12	
$5,000 to $6,999	11	
$3,000 to $4,999	11	
Under $2,599	8	
Undesignated	2	
	100	
Political affiliation		
Republican	24	Did not query
Democrat	44	
Independent	29	

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Other	3	
	100	
Region		
East	26	Did not query
Midwest	28	
South	28	
West	18	
	100	
Community size		
500,000 and over	30	Did not query
50,000 to 499,999	25	
2,500 to 49,999	18	
Under 2,500	27	
	100	
Education		
Elementary grades	16	
High school incomplete	18	
High school complete	30	
Technical, trade, or business school	6	
College incomplete	16	
College graduate	14	
	100	
Juniors		51
Seniors		37
No answer		12
		100

Chapter 8

Seventh Annual Gallup Poll of Public Attitudes Toward Education — 1975

The Purpose of the Study

The present survey has sought to discover the views of American citizens toward their public schools. It is the seventh annual survey in the series launched in 1969. This year the survey was funded by the Ford Foundation. Previous surveys were sponsored by CFK Ltd.

An effort is made each year to deal with new and emerging problems which confront public school education. A number of questions in the survey are repeated from earlier surveys in order to measure trends.

As in earlier surveys, all the data are analyzed by four groups: the total public sampled, parents who have children now attending public schools, parents with children now attending nonpublic schools, and adults who have no children either in public or nonpublic schools.

To assure that the survey embraced issues of current importance to the educational world, Phi Delta Kappa brought together in Atlanta a panel of citizens to make suggestions in the planning stage of the present study. Expenses were paid by the Ford Foundation.

These participants were: Edward Brainard, director, Leadership Development, Colorado Department of Education, Denver; B. Frank Brown, division director, I/D/E/A, Melbourne, Florida; George Brown, lieutenant governor, State of Colorado, Denver; Albert Burstein, assemblyman, State of New Jersey, Jersey City; Alan K. Campbell, dean, Maxwell Graduate School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University; Anne Campbell, state commissioner of education, Lincoln, Nebraska; Eugene P. Connell, president, Board of Education, Clarkstown Central School District No. 1, New City, New York; Alonzo Crim, superintendent of schools, Atlanta, Georgia; Stanley M. Elam, editor, *Phi Delta Kappan*, Bloomington, Indiana; Hope Kading, vice-chairperson, Education Commission of the States, Denver, Colorado; William A. Mitchell, superintendent, School District No. 6, Greeley, Colorado; Margery Tabankin, director, The Youth Project, Washington, D.C.

We wish to thank these individuals for their many valuable suggestions.

Research Procedure

The Sample. This year the sample – described as a modified probability sample – included a total of 1,558 adults (18 years and older). All interviewing was done by a trained staff of interviewers, maintained by the Gallup organization, who conducted personal, in-home interviews in all areas of the country and in all types of local communities. A complete analysis of the respondents appears at the end of this report.

Time of Interviewing. The fieldwork for the study was conducted during the period of June 25 through June 30, 1975.

The Interviewing Form. All questions were put through a series of pretests conducted prior to the final question selection and actual fieldwork.

Findings from this report apply only to the country as a whole and not to specific local areas. Local surveys, using the same questions, can be conducted in order to compare local communities to the national norm.

Major Problems Confronting The Public Schools in 1975

Respondents have been asked each year in the seven surveys in this series to cite the most important problems of the public schools in their own communities.

In six of these seven surveys, including the present one, the problem most frequently mentioned is "lack of discipline." The percentage of those interviewed who cite discipline has not differed significantly from the first survey: Approximately one person in four names discipline as the most important problem.

The major problems which the public names this year, 1975, are substantially the same as those mentioned in the 1974 survey, with one exception. This year, for the first time, the number of respondents mentioning "crime" (vandalism, stealing, etc.) is great enough to place this problem among the top 10. Actually, in number of mentions, it ranks in eighth place. And this year, for the first time, "drinking" (use of alcohol) is mentioned by enough respondents to establish a new category, although it is not one of the top 10.

Comparing this year's findings with those of 1969, the first survey, brings to light a significant drop in the number who say that "lack of proper facilities" is a major problem in their local schools.

Below, in order of mentions, is the list of the top 10 problems of the public schools, as viewed by the public, in the year 1975:

1. Lack of discipline
2. Integration/segregation/busing
3. Lack of proper financial support
4. Difficulty of getting "good" teachers
5. Size of school/classes
6. Use of drugs
7. Poor curriculum
8. Crime/vandalism/stealing
9. Lack of proper facilities
10. Pupils' lack of interest

Rating of the Public Schools

In the 1974 survey, an effort was made to establish a rating of the public schools that would provide a base for future comparisons. A five-point scale was used, one which the schools themselves have employed historically. This question was asked:

> **Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D, and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the *public* schools themselves, in this community, were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the public schools here – A, B, C, D, or FAIL?**

During the year, a significant drop has been registered in the number of persons giving the schools a grade of A. The change is from 18% last year to 13% this year.

The lowest ratings of the public schools come, understandably, from parents whose children are now attending independent/parochial schools. In this group, only 5% give the public schools an A rating; 34% give them a rating of either D or FAIL.

The public's rating of the schools may be influenced by the general loss of confidence in and respect for all American institutions. Education and the church, it should be pointed out, still have much higher confidence ratings than Congress, the Supreme Court, organized labor, or big business. A Gallup Poll released in July, 1975 shows that the public gives a high confidence rating of 67% to the schools as opposed to a 40% confidence rating for Congress, a 38% confidence rating for organized labor, and a 34% rating for big business.

Apart from this, it should be pointed out, the media have given wide publicity this year to the increasing crime and vandalism in the schools throughout the nation and to the declining test scores as reported by national college entrance examinations.

Ratings given to the public schools in 1974 and those given in 1975 indicate these changes during this period:

	National Totals	
Ratings Given the Public Schools	**1974** **%**	**1975** **%**
A rating	18	13
B rating	30	30
C rating	21	28
D rating	6	9
FAIL	5	7
Don't know/no answer	20	13

Parents with children in the public schools – the group in the best position to judge the quality of education in the schools – give the schools a higher rating than do those who have no children in the public schools.

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
A rating	13	11	17	5
B rating	30	26	36	25
C rating	28	27	29	24
D rating	9	9	8	16
FAIL	7	7	7	18
Don't know/ no answer	13	20	3	12

When the results are analyzed by the socioeconomic groups in the population, a fact important to the educational profession comes to light. The two bellwether groups – the college educated and the young adults – give the public schools the lowest ratings. Clearly, this should be regarded as a warning signal.

In 1974, 40% of the 18-29 age group gave the public schools an A or B rating. This year only 32% of this age group gave the schools an A or B rating. Last year, 51% of those who had attended college gave the schools an A or B rating. In 1975 this proportion has dropped to 43%. In the present survey, 41% of those who attended college gave the schools a C or D rating, compared to 29% who gave the schools a C or D last year.

	A %	B %	C %	D %	FAIL %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
NATIONAL TOTALS	13	30	28	9	7	13
Sex						
Men	11	30	28	10	8	13
Women	14	30	28	8	7	13
Race						
White	13	31	28	9	7	12
Nonwhite	14	23	28	11	10	14
Age						
18 to 29 years	6	26	37	12	7	12
30 to 49 years	13	33	29	11	8	6
50 years and over	18	29	19	5	7	22

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Education						
Elementary grades	21	25	17	7	9	21
High school	12	29	30	9	8	12
College	9	34	31	10	6	10
Community size						
1 million and over	11	29	23	9	9	19
500,000 to 999,999	14	27	27	11	8	13
50,000 to 499,999	10	28	30	12	7	13
2,500 to 49,999	17	30	30	5	5	13
Under 2,500	13	32	28	9	8	10
Region						
East	14	32	24	7	7	16
Midwest	14	30	29	8	8	11
South	12	30	29	9	7	13
West	10	26	29	15	8	12

Use of Drugs and Alcohol

The use of drugs by young people is regarded as a serious problem in all areas of the nation, in cities and towns from the largest to the smallest. In fact, the use of drugs in small communities appears to have reached the same level as in the largest cities, a change which represents a marked difference from five years ago (1970).

A total of 59% of the parents who have children now attending public schools say that the use of drugs by young people locally is a serious problem.

Alcohol, which many regard as another kind of drug, has become a relatively new problem at a time when the use of marijuana and hard drugs has leveled off. As in the case of other drugs, alcohol is as much a problem in the small communities as in the large.

The first question asked: **Is the use of drugs by young people a serious problem in this community?**

The second question asked: **What about alcoholic drinks?**

Drugs a Serious Local Youth Problem

	Yes %	No %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
NATIONAL TOTALS	58	27	15

Sex			
Men	56	29	15
Women	60	25	15
Race			
White	57	28	15
Nonwhite	64	21	15
Age			
18 to 29 years	56	32	12
30 to 49 years	61	27	12
50 years and over	57	22	21
Education			
Elementary grades	62	21	17
High school	59	27	14
College	53	31	16
Community size			
1 million and over	54	26	20
500,000 to 999,999	57	25	18
50,000 to 499,999	62	23	15
2,500 to 49,999	69	21	10
Under 2,500	51	35	14
Region			
East	51	31	18
Midwest	63	24	13
South	59	27	14
West	60	24	16

Alcohol a Serious Local Youth Problem

	Yes %	No %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
NATIONAL TOTALS	55	27	18
Sex			
Men	53	31	16
Women	56	24	20
Race			
White	54	28	18
Nonwhite	59	25	16
Age			
18 to 29 years	60	27	13
30 to 49 years	53	32	15
50 years and over	54	21	25
Education			
Elementary grades	57	23	20
High school	56	27	17
College	50	31	19
Community size			
1 million and over	53	26	21
500,000 to 999,999	57	23	20
50,000 to 499,999	55	25	20

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2,500 to 49,999	61	26	13
Under 2,500	52	32	16
Region			
East	49	30	21
Midwest	61	25	14
South	53	28	19
West	56	25	19

Program on Effects of Drugs and Alcohol

Every major group in the population, by overwhelming majorities, would require students to attend a program on the effects of drugs and alcohol.

The success of such required programs has been spotty in the places in which they have been tried. On the other hand, many citizens believe that it is important that students who try drugs and alcohol, or who persist in their use, know all the dangers they risk.

The question:

> **Should the schools in this community require students to attend a program on the effects of drugs and alcohol?**

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes	84	81	87	88
No	11	12	10	8
Don't know/ no answer	5	7	3	4

Public Awareness and Attitudes With Respect to the Supreme Court's Ruling on Suspensions

Although only four in 10 (41%) of the persons included in this survey had heard of the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling regarding the suspension of students, a majority of those who were aware of this decision hold the view that the

Court did not go too far in making its ruling.

The Court, it will be recalled, now requires school principals to give written notice to a student and his parents and to hold a hearing when a student is suspended from school.

Some educators and school board members have objected to this ruling, believing that it, along with others, has added to the difficulties of operating the school system. The public, judging from the findings of this survey, accepts the Court's decision as being a fair one.

The question:

> **A U.S. Supreme Court decision requires school principals to give written notice to a student and his parents and to hold a hearing when the student is suspended from school. Have you heard or read about this ruling?**

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes, have heard	41	39	44	47
No, have not heard	55	56	54	50
Don't know/ no answer	4	5	2	3

The second question (asked only of those who had heard or read about the ruling):

> **Do you think the Court went too far in making this ruling?**

	Yes, Court Went Too Far %	No, Court Did Not %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
NATIONAL TOTALS	26	67	7
Sex			
Men	33	60	7
Women	21	73	6
Race			
White	29	66	5
Nonwhite	8	77	15

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Age			
18 to 29 years	22	71	7
30 to 49 years	25	68	7
50 years and over	31	62	7
Education			
Elementary grades	31	55	14
High school	24	70	6
College	28	68	4
Community size			
1 million and over	18	71	11
500,000 to 999,999	27	67	6
50,000 to 499,999	27	65	8
2,500 to 49,999	24	71	5
Under 2,500	31	64	5
Region			
East	25	69	6
Midwest	30	65	5
South	25	65	10
West	25	69	6

Attitudes Toward Student Rights

Although the Supreme Court has upheld rights of students in recent rulings, the weight of opinion in the nation is that students have too many rights and privileges. Those who say students, generally speaking, have "too many" rights and privileges comprise 45%; those who say "not enough" or who say these rights and privileges are about right total 37%.

When the same question was asked in the 1972 survey, 41% said that students had "too many" rights. This compares with the 45% in the present study. More important, parents of children in the schools are increasingly of the opinion that students have too many rights. The percentage of parents with children in the public schools who say "too many" has increased from 40% to 47%; those with children in parochial/private schools, from 40% to 56%.

The question:

> **Generally speaking, do the local public school students in this community have too many rights and privileges, or not enough?**

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Too many	45	43	47	56
Just right	27	22	35	22
Not enough	10	10	11	9
No opinion	18	25	7	13

Schools with More Strict Behavior Standards

The growing reaction against low standards of behavior in the public schools is reflected in the responses to a question asking where respondents would like to send their children to school. The option offered was a special public school that had strict discipline, a strict dress code, and placed emphasis on the three Rs.

The special school with more strict behavior standards appeals to all groups, even the group composed of parents of children now attending public school.

The growing attraction of independent schools, which, generally speaking, are more strict in their standards than the public schools, is reflected in the findings. Whereas the national percentage who say they would send their children to such a school is 57%, the comparable figure for parents whose children are now attending parochial or private schools is 70%.

When respondents were asked why they chose the special school, they gave as their reason the fact that children need discipline, strict rules, and respect for others. The next reason, in number of mentions, is the superiority of this type of education to the present public schools in their community. And third is the need for a more strict dress code.

Those who would not send their children to such a school gave as their reasons for holding this view the fact that such a school would stifle the child, that strict discipline is not the answer to the present problems of schools, and that a dress code is not important. Others stated that the present schools were entirely satisfactory.

The question:

In some U.S. cities, parents of schoolchildren are

being given the choice of sending their children to a special public school that has strict discipline, including a dress code, and that puts emphasis on the three Rs. If you lived in one of these cities, and had children of school age, would you send them to such a school or not?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes, would send children to special school	57	56	56	70
No, would not	33	32	36	22
Don't know/ no answer	10	12	8	8

More Work for Students

Further evidence of the public's negative attitude toward what they regard as the too-great permissiveness of the public schools comes from answers to another question. This one asked respondents if children in the elementary schools of their communities and in the high schools were required to work too hard, or not hard enough.

Parents of children now attending public school say that students are not being given enough work to do – both in the elementary grades and in high school. A negligible number – 5% in the case of elementary students and only 2% in the case of high school students – report that students are made to work "too hard."

Those parents who now have children attending private/ parochial schools are even more of the opinion that children in the public high schools are not made to work hard enough. Two-thirds of those in this group say that public high school students are not made to work hard enough.

The first question: **In general, do you think elementary schoolchildren in the public schools here are made to work too hard in school and on homework, or not hard enough?**

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The second question: What about students in the public high schools here — in general, are they required to work too hard or not hard enough?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Elementary School Students				
Too hard	5	5	5	6
Not hard enough	49	46	53	53
About right amount	28	25	35	23
Don't know/ no answer	18	24	7	18
High School Students				
Too hard	3	4	2	3
Not hard enough	54	53	54	66
About right amount	22	21	24	13
Don't know/ no answer	21	22	20	18

Minimum Requirements for Graduation

Educators and laymen interested in the nation's educational system have sought, in many recent studies, to define the goals of education for the present generation of students.

From a research viewpoint, most attempts to obtain the public's views on the goals of education encounter a whole series of difficulties. First of all, there is the problem of separating the goals of life from the specific goals of the educational system. For example, "concern for the rights of others" is obviously a laudable goal, but the difficulty lies in its implementation. Is there a body of knowledge surrounding this goal and do teaching skills exist for developing this attitude?

Of course, the question also arises as to whether it is the primary function of the school, of the home, or of the church to develop in students "concern for the rights of others." And finally, is there any way to determine the success of a school system in reaching this goal?

Many other goals, such as "developing a positive attitude toward learning," are equally nebulous. Nevertheless, these do not constitute sufficient reason to ignore these goals. They are important, and certainly anything that teachers and schools can do to further these ends should be pursued, but not – judging from present survey findings – at the neglect of essential communication and mathematical skills and certain basic knowledge.

With these problems in mind, we sought, in the present study, to approach the problem from a different vantage point. We wanted to obtain the public's views on the minimum requirements that should be set for graduation for those students who do not plan to go to college and who propose to take a job or acquire job training immediately following their graduation from high school.

The attainment of these goals falls almost entirely within the province of the school as opposed to the home or to other institutions. The goals are specific and performance can be determined objectively.

Again, it should be stated that these are minimum requirements for students who are ending their formal education. If the schools can develop a greater sense of social responsibility on the part of these students, if they can encourage them to carry on the learning process, if they can help them to get more out of life, then these values represent a clear and added gain.

Findings from this survey approach reveal what earlier survey results have shown about the pragmatic philosophy of the American people. The priorities they set reflect their attitudes about the chief purpose of the school system – to prepare students to get jobs and to advance in the business and professional world.

The question was asked:

> What requirements, if any, would you set for graduation from high school for those students *who do not plan to go on to college* but who plan to take a job or job training following graduation? I'll read off a number of requirements, and then you tell me how important each one is as a requirement for graduation for these students. We would like to know

whether you think it is very important, fairly important, or not important.

The results below show the percentage of the public who describe each of the nine requirements as being "very important," "fairly important," etc. Percentages are shown in descending order.

Reading Requirements	Very Important	Fairly Important	Not Important	Don't Know/ No Answer
	%	%	%	%
How important is it that these students be able to read well enough to follow an instruction manual?	96	3	-	1
. . . be able to write a letter of application using correct grammar and correct spelling?	92	6	1	1
. . . know enough arithmetic to be able to figure out such a problem as the total square feet in a room?	87	10	2	1
. . . have a salable skill, such as typing, auto mechanics, nurse's aide, business machines?	85	12	2	1
. . . know something about the U.S. government, the political parties, voting procedures?	75	21	3	1
. . . know something about the history of the U.S., such as the Constitution, Bill of Rights, and the like?	68	27	4	1
. . . know something about the major nations of the world today, their kind of government, and their way of life?	49	40	10	1
. . . know something about the history of mankind, the great leaders in art, literature?	33	44	21	2
. . . know a foreign language?	18	28	51	3

Close agreement is found in the views of all major groups regarding these minimum requirements. Those who do not have children now attending school agree almost exactly with those who do.

Federal Aid for the Public Schools

Resistance to higher property taxes and to other state and local taxes has led many educators to the belief that the educational system must rely to a greater extent in the future on the federal government for needed funds.

Since the federal government itself is besieged for increased appropriations by all departments and agencies of government, and for a host of social programs, the question arises as to where the public schools stand vis-à-vis these other claimants for federal revenue.

The present contribution of the federal government to typical school districts is minor, and half of those questioned in the present survey were unaware that the federal government provides money for their local schools. Even in the case of those who were aware that the federal government does provide some money, there is much confusion as to the size of the federal contribution.

The need for greater financial assistance to the schools is found throughout the nation. When the public is asked to name the greatest problems which their local public schools face, the need for greater financing is typically cited among the first three needs or problems of the local schools.

To discover the strength of the public school's case relative to 10 other programs that call for sizable amounts from the federal treasury, respondents were asked to state which one of these programs should be given first consideration when additional federal money becomes available. Survey participants were asked also for their second and third choices.

When all of these choices are combined for each program, the order of priorities that the public would establish looks like this:

1. Health care
2. Public school education
3. Law enforcement
4. Welfare and aid to poor
5. Public housing
6. Pollution, conservation
7. Mass transit (trains, buses)
8. Military defense
9. Agricultural aid
10. Highway improvement

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11. Foreign aid

If future Congresses were to follow these priorities, then the public schools should look forward to substantial increases in federal financing. By the same token, military defense, which presently takes almost a third of the federal budget, would get proportionately less.

While the public schools stand near the top of the list, it should be pointed out that no single program of the 11 listed obtains more than 18% of the first choices and only one, health care, gets more than half of all choices – first, second, and third.

Public school education receives 16% of the first choices and a total of 48% of the three choices combined.

The question:

> **If and when more federal money from Washington is available, which *one* of the areas on this card do you think should be given first consideration when these funds are distributed? And which *one* of these areas do you think should be given *second* consideration? And which *one* of these areas do you think should be given *third* consideration?**

	NATIONAL TOTALS			
	First Choice %	Second Choice %	Third Choice %	Combined Choices %
Health care	18	19	16	53
Public school education	16	15	17	48
Law enforcement	11	14	16	41
Welfare and aid to poor	14	11	7	32
Public housing	10	9	7	26
Pollution, conservation	8	8	8	24
Mass transit (trains, buses)	6	7	6	19
Military defense	6	5	5	16
Agricultural aid	4	4	7	15
Highway improvement	4	4	5	13
Foreign aid	1	1	1	3
No opinion	2	3	5	10

Training Programs Planned By the Public Schools

In most of the seven annual surveys in this series, questions have been asked about training programs for students who are not interested in the usual curricular subjects and who stay on in school only because they are required to by law.

The public has favored by large majorities all the proposals for dealing with these young people – all except the plan to let them quit school and go it alone without supervision.

While the public has recognized the problem presented by students who are wholly uninterested in academic work, still no program has emerged or been put into effect on a national scale.

The public schools, if they follow the public's wishes, have an opportunity to work out a special program that will combine educational and vocational training. The public favors giving the schools this responsibility by an overwhelming vote of 86%.

Most European nations have wrestled with this same problem and have devised programs that are successful. And, as a matter of fact, so have some public school systems in the United States.

Many of these programs call for a combination of technical training and on-the-job experience, with attention given to communication and mathematical skills that are deemed essential.

If experiments with this kind of program are devised and tested, almost certainly a way will be found to deal with students in the 15- to 18-year age group who are uninterested in academic subjects and who all too often become troublemakers in school.

The question:

> **It has been suggested that the public schools be given the responsibility to set up special job training programs for young people, age 15 to 18, who are out of work and out of school. Would you favor or oppose such a plan?**

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Favor giving schools this responsibility	86	87	85	84

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Oppose	11	9	12	15
Don't know/ no answer	3	4	3	1

The Nongraded School

The nongraded school concept has wide appeal. In fact, all major groups of the public favor the idea by margins of more than two to one. The high percentage favoring nongraded schools indicates that the public is ready to accept innovations in a period when many persons are inclined to blame new methods and new viewpoints in the educational world for an apparent decline in student performance.

When the same question was asked of the general public in 1972, a slightly higher favorable figure was obtained. In that year, the national totals showed 71% favoring the nongraded school concept as opposed to 64% in the present survey. In the earlier study, 22% were opposed, which compares with 28% today.

The question:

> **Should a student be able to progress through the school system at his own speed and without regard to the usual grade levels? This would mean that he might study seventh-grade math, but only fifth-grade English. Would you favor or oppose such a plan in the local schools?**

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Favor	64	62	66	73
Oppose	28	28	28	25
No opinion	8	10	6	2

Instruction in Morals and Moral Behavior

Presumably, the home and the church are the proper places to give children instruction in morals and moral behavior. But in the absence of such instruction in many homes, the responsibility shifts, unfairly perhaps, to the schools. At least to meet the present need, an overwhelming majority of all major groups in the population would like to see such instruction provided by the schools. And, significantly, one of the groups most in favor is that composed of parents of children now attending public schools.

The constitutional prohibition against religious instruction in the public schools could lead to legal difficulties in the teaching of morals and moral behavior. It has been suggested, however, that one effective and legal way to deal with moral behavior is by the case-history method. Dealing with true instances of children who have been confronted with specific problems could provide a better understanding of the law and why moral behavior is important. Equally important, preaching and moralizing could be avoided if this method were followed.

The question:

Would you favor or oppose instruction in the schools that would deal with morals and moral behavior?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Favor instruction in morals/moral behavior	79	76	84	85
Oppose	15	17	12	13
Don't know/ no answer	6	7	4	2

Textbook Censorship

The weight that should be attached to parental objections to books that students are assigned to read has become a controversial issue in some states.

To shed light on the public's viewpoint on this matter, the following question was asked:

When parents object to books or material in textbooks on grounds of religion, politics, race or sex discrimination, how much consideration should be given to the parents' views in deciding whether to keep these books in the school — a great deal, some, little, or none?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
A great deal	33	31	37	38
Some	43	44	42	36
Little	12	11	13	14
None	7	7	6	9
Don't know/ no answer	5	7	2	3

Should Public School Teachers Be Permitted To Strike?

A plurality of all citizens opposes permitting teachers to strike, but the margin of those opposing to those favoring has decreased in recent years.

In the first survey in this series (1969), two questions dealt with this situation: "How do you feel about teachers joining labor unions? Do you think teachers should have the right to strike?" The public, at that time, by a small margin, held that teachers should be permitted to join labor unions, but opposed the right to strike by a ratio of 59% to 37%.

In the years since, more teachers have joined teacher associations and unions, and strikes have, likewise, increased.

Today, a plurality of all citizens in the sample still opposes the right to strike by a margin of 48% to 45%, but important differences are found by age groups, by education, and by community size.

The question:

Should public school teachers be permitted to strike or not?

	Yes %	No %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
NATIONAL TOTALS	45	48	7
Sex			
Men	49	46	5
Women	42	49	9
Race			
White	44	50	6
Nonwhite	57	28	15
Age			
18 to 29 years	58	36	6
30 to 49 years	46	48	6
50 years and over	35	57	8
Education			
Elementary grades	36	53	11
High school	45	48	7
College	52	44	4
Community size			
1 million and over	46	44	10
500,000 to 999,999	53	42	5
50,000 to 499,999	53	43	4
2,500 to 49,999	42	53	5
Under 2,500	36	55	9
Region			
East	46	46	8
Midwest	46	49	5
South	42	49	9
West	47	48	5

Compulsory Arbitration

The public is almost evenly divided today on the issue of the right to strike by teachers in the public schools. At the same time, a large majority of all major groups in the population favors settling disputes by compulsory arbitration.

The question:

In case an agreement cannot be reached between a teachers union (or association) and the school board, would you favor or oppose a plan that would require

the dispute to be settled by the decision of an arbitrator or panel acceptable to both the union and school board?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Favor compulsory arbitration	84	83	86	85
Oppose	7	6	7	9
Don't know/ no answer	9	11	7	6

Principals as a Part of Management

The question of whether principals should be regarded as a part of management or as employees – and therefore, with an employee's right to strike – is not really an issue insofar as the general public is concerned. Principals are a part of management, in their view.

Eight in every 10 persons in the sample say principals are a part of management; only one in nine holds an opposing view.

The question:

Should principals be considered a part of management?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes, they should	80	78	81	86
No, they should not	11	11	13	8
Don't know/ no answer	9	11	6	6

Preference for Men Versus Women Principals

The proportion of men serving as principals has increased at the expense of women in recent years. Now, with the new equality laws in effect, the situation may change again. With this in mind, the following question was put to the respondents in the sample.

The question:

> **The law may require hiring as many women school principals as men. Which would you personally prefer for this job — a man or a woman?**

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Prefer man as principal	39	38	41	50
Prefer woman	7	8	5	6
Makes no difference	52	52	53	44
Don't know/ no answer	2	2	1	-

Awareness and Attitudes with Respect To Open Education

The open concept of education, which came originally from England and which has been adopted in many schools throughout the United States in recent years, is still relatively unknown to a majority of Americans and even to parents whose children now attend the public schools.

Slightly more than one-fourth (27%) of all individuals questioned in the survey said that they knew what is meant by the "open" education concept or idea. And when asked to describe, in their own words, what an "open" school is, most of these proved their familiarity with the concept. Only a negligible few said that it meant "schools open to all."

In the case of parents with children in private or parochial schools, a higher proportion (33%) claimed familiarity with the "open" school concept and, significantly, a higher proportion of this group approved of open education.

These questions were asked:

Do you happen to know what is meant by the "open" school concept or idea?

If yes:

In your own words, how would you describe an "open" school?

How do you feel about "open" schools? Do you approve or disapprove of them?

Awareness of Open Education

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Said they knew what is meant by open schools	27	24	30	33
Didn't know	60	63	56	54
Weren't sure	13	13	14	13
Attitudes Toward Open Education*				
Approve of open schools	13	12	14	18
Disapprove	10	8	12	11
Don't know/ no answer	4	4	4	4
	27	24	30	33

The Decline in National Test Scores

Educators have cited many reasons for declining national test scores reported in recent years, particularly in the case of the SAT tests given to high school seniors who are interested in going on to college.

Do parents and the general public hold the same opinions as educators? To find out, an "open" question dealing with this problem was included in the survey.

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*Percentages of those who said they knew what is meant by open education.

Analysis of the public's verbatim responses shows that the reason offered most often for declining test scores is lack of student interest and motivation. The public offers one explanation seldom stressed by professional educators. In earlier years, competition to find places in college proved to be a powerful incentive to work hard and to get good grades. Now students know that, even if they do poorly in school, they can still find some college that will admit them. Moreover, a college education is not deemed as important as it once was in finding a job. Many respondents point out that college graduates are having a hard time getting jobs. The net effect of this has been to remove some of the drive to work hard and to excel.

Nearly the same percentage of respondents cite the lack of discipline in the home and in the school. Some typical comments are: "Parents no longer insist that their children apply themselves and get their work done." "They let their children run wild in the streets." "Teachers are too lenient and don't require adequate performance." "Teachers spend too much time trying to keep order in class."

Next in frequency of mention are those responses which cite the curriculum as being too easy. Examples of these are: "Students have been allowed to learn what they want to learn and not what they need to learn." "Too many soft subjects." "Not enough attention to basic subjects."

Approximately one response in five blames the teachers and their lack of interest. Respondents say, "Teachers do not require students to learn anymore." "Teachers at each level pass the buck back to the previous level and say 'You didn't do your work well.' " "All teachers are interested in is more money."

Many other causes for the declining scores of students were offered, among them the idea that television occupies too much of young peoples' time and that outside activities draw too much of their interest. Respondents also cited overcrowding, drugs, and such other reasons as "the complete breakdown of the public school system" and "the disintegration of the family." The question:

> **The national tests that have been given to students throughout the nation indicate that students today do not have as high scores as they had a few years ago in many subject areas. What do you think is the reason for this?**

Students' lack of interest/motivation	29%
Lack of discipline in the home and school	28%
Poor curriculum (too easy, not enough emphasis on basics)	22%
Inadequate teachers, uninterested teachers	21%
Too many outside interests, including TV	8%
Miscellaneous, including integration, overcrowding, drugs, etc.	13%
No opinion	13%

(Figures add to more than 100% because of multiple answers.)

Further Breakdowns

Detailed and different breakdowns of some of the responses to the 1975 poll questions are provided in this section as a supplement to tables already presented.

The Major Problems

What do you think are the biggest problems with which the *public* schools in this community must deal?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Lack of discipline	23	23	23	21
Integration/segregation/busing	15	17	11	16
Lack of proper financial support	14	13	15	13
Difficulty of getting "good" teachers	11	11	12	12
Size of school/classes	10	7	13	5
Use of drugs	9	10	9	10
Poor curriculum	5	4	7	5
Crime/vandalism/stealing	4	5	4	-
Lack of proper facilities	3	2	3	4

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Pupils' lack of interest	3	4	2	2
Parents' lack of interest	2	2	3	3
School board policies	1	1	1	2
There are no problems	5	4	6	5
Miscellaneous	12	11	13	24
Don't know/no answer	10	13	6	5

(Totals add to more than 100% because of multiple answers.)

Use of Drugs and Alcohol

Is the use of drugs by young people a serious problem in this community?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes	58	56	59	78
No	27	25	31	14
Don't know/ no answer	15	19	10	8

What about alcoholic drinks?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes	55	56	53	64
No	27	23	33	27
Don't know/ no answer	18	21	14	9

Should the schools in this community require students to attend a program on the effects of drugs and alcohol?

	Yes %	No %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
NATIONAL TOTALS	84	11	5

Sex			
Men	80	14	6
Women	87	9	4
Race			
White	84	11	5
Nonwhite	81	13	6
Age			
18 to 29 years	80	17	3
30 to 49 years	87	10	3
50 years and over	82	9	9
Education			
Elementary grades	81	11	8
High school	85	10	5
College	84	13	3
Community size			
1 million and over	84	9	7
500,000 to 999,999	86	10	4
50,000 to 499,999	83	12	5
2,500 to 49,999	84	10	6
Under 2,500	83	13	4
Region			
East	83	10	7
Midwest	82	13	5
South	85	10	5
West	83	13	4

Suspension from School

A U.S. Supreme Court decision requires school principals to give written notice to a student and his parents and hold a hearing when the student is suspended from school. Have you heard or read about this ruling?

	Have Heard or Read	Have Not Heard or Read	Don't Know/ No Answer
	%	%	%
NATIONAL TOTALS	41	55	4
Sex			
Men	41	55	4
Women	42	55	3
Race			
White	42	55	3
Nonwhite	40	53	7

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Age			
18 to 29 years	40	57	3
30 to 49 years	44	53	3
50 years and over	39	56	5
Education			
Elementary grades	39	55	6
High school	39	58	3
College	49	49	2
Community size			
1 million and over	36	59	5
500,000 to 999,999	44	54	2
50,000 to 499,999	44	53	3
2,500 to 49,999	39	59	2
Under 2,500	43	52	5
Region			
East	40	57	3
Midwest	40	56	4
South	40	55	5
West	47	51	2

Alternative Public Schools

In some U.S. cities, parents of schoolchildren are being given the choice of sending their children to a special public school that has strict discipline, including a dress code, and that puts emphasis on the three Rs. If you lived in one of these cities and had children of school age, would you send them to such a school or not?

	Yes %	No %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
NATIONAL TOTALS	57	33	10
Sex			
Men	54	35	11
Women	60	31	9
Race			
White	57	33	10
Nonwhite	57	29	14
Age			
18 to 29 years	43	51	6
30 to 49 years	59	31	10
50 years and over	65	21	14

Education			
Elementary grades	58	25	17
High school	58	34	8
College	54	37	9
Community size			
1 million and over	61	28	11
500,000 to 999,999	55	40	5
50,000 to 499,999	58	34	8
2,500 to 49,999	53	37	10
Under 2,500	57	30	13
Region			
East	55	33	12
Midwest	57	36	7
South	60	28	12
West	56	35	9

Do Students Work Hard Enough in School?

In general, do you think elementary school children in the public schools here are made to work too hard in school and on homework, or not hard enough?

	Too Hard %	Not Hard Enough %	About Right Amount %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
NATIONAL TOTALS	5	49	28	18
Sex				
Men	4	51	27	18
Women	6	47	30	17
Race				
White	5	47	30	18
Nonwhite	4	65	19	12
Age				
18 to 29 years	6	46	29	19
30 to 49 years	6	52	32	10
50 years and over	5	47	23	25
Education				
Elementary grades	7	49	24	20
High school	5	48	30	17
College	4	51	28	17
Community size				
1 million and over	4	52	20	24
500,000 to 999,999	3	54	20	23
50,000 to 499,999	5	47	31	17
2,500 to 49,999	6	44	33	17
Under 2,500	6	48	34	12

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Region				
East	5	48	27	20
Midwest	7	44	31	18
South	5	52	30	13
West	3	54	23	20

What about students in the public high schools here — in general, are they required to work too hard or not hard enough?

	Too Hard %	Not Hard Enough %	About Right Amount %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
NATIONAL TOTALS	3	54	22	21
Sex				
Men	3	54	20	23
Women	3	54	23	20
Race				
White	3	53	22	22
Nonwhite	5	62	16	17
Age				
18 to 29 years	3	54	22	21
30 to 49 years	3	56	22	19
50 years and over	4	51	22	23
Education				
Elementary grades	7	49	21	23
High school	2	53	24	21
College	3	58	18	21
Community size				
1 million and over	2	57	20	21
500,000 to 999,999	4	56	15	25
50,000 to 499,999	3	53	21	23
2,500 to 49,999	4	50	28	18
Under 2,500	3	53	24	20
Region				
East	2	53	23	22
Midwest	4	54	23	19
South	3	50	25	22
West	3	61	14	22

Federal Aid

Do you happen to know whether the schools in your school district receive any money from the federal government (the government in Washington)?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes, they do	50	42	59	57
No, they do not	6	7	6	5
Don't know/ no answer	44	51	35	38

Do you happen to know whether the schools in your school district receive any money from the federal government (the government in Washington)?

	Yes, They Do %	No, They Do Not %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
NATIONAL TOTALS	50	6	44
Sex			
Men	50	7	43
Women	49	5	46
Race			
White	51	6	43
Nonwhite	36	8	56
Age			
18 to 29 years	44	7	49
30 to 49 years	58	6	36
50 years and over	43	6	51
Education			
Elementary grades	31	5	64
High school	48	7	45
College	66	6	28
Community size			
1 million and over	40	8	52
500,000 to 999,999	44	10	46
50,000 to 499,999	52	6	42
2,500 to 49,999	53	3	44
Under 2,500	54	6	40
Region			
East	45	11	44
Midwest	49	6	45
South	49	3	48
West	57	5	38

What part of the school budget in your district do you think this federal money represents – a small part, a fairly sizable part, or a very large part of the budget? (Asked of those who said the schools in their

school district receive money from the federal government.)

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Small part	17	15	22	20
Fairly sizable part	18	16	20	16
Very large part	6	4	7	10
Don't know/ no answer	9	7	10	11

If and when more federal money from Washington is available, which *one* of the areas on this card do you think should be given first consideration when these funds are distributed?

	Areas Shown on Card					
	Health Care	Public School Education	Welfare and Aid to Poor	Law Enforcement	Public Housing	Pollution, Conservation
	%	%	%	%	%	%
NATIONAL TOTALS	18	16	14	11	10	8
Sex						
Men	16	13	12	12	11	9
Women	20	19	16	10	8	7
Race						
White	19	16	11	12	9	9
Nonwhite	14	14	38	3	17	2
Age						
18 to 29 years	15	18	16	8	8	13
30 to 49 years	17	20	13	9	8	8
50 years and over	23	9	15	14	12	5
Education						
Elementary grades	19	12	24	9	12	2
High school	19	14	16	11	11	8
College	15	24	5	12	4	13
Community size						
1 million and over	21	17	10	12	13	9
500,000 to 999,999	20	9	19	14	8	11
50,000 to 499,999	17	18	15	10	12	9
2,500 to 49,999	18	16	18	6	11	8
Under 2,500	16	17	12	12	5	5

Region						
East	23	15	12	10	13	8
Midwest	21	14	14	14	6	9
South	15	18	17	9	9	7
West	11	19	14	9	10	9

Areas Shown on Card (Cont.)

	Mass Transit	Military Defense	Agricultural Aid	Highway Improvement	Foreign Aid	No Opinion
	%	%	%	%	%	%
NATIONAL TOTALS	6	6	4	4	1	2
Sex						
Men	7	8	5	4	1	2
Women	5	5	3	3	1	3
Race						
White	6	7	4	4	1	2
Nonwhite	2	1	4	1	2	2
Age						
18 to 29 years	5	4	5	5	1	2
30 to 49 years	6	8	5	3	1	2
50 years and over	6	6	4	2	1	3
Education						
Elementary grades	2	5	4	4	2	5
High school	5	5	4	4	1	2
College	9	9	4	2	1	2
Community size						
1 million and over	7	5	*	2	*	4
500,000 to 999,999	6	7	2	2	1	1
50,000 to 499,999	6	7	3	1	1	1
2,500 to 49,999	4	5	6	4	1	3
Under 2,500	6	7	9	8	*	3
Region						
East	5	5	2	4	*	3
Midwest	6	4	6	5	*	1
South	4	8	6	3	2	2
West	9	9	3	2	1	4

*Less than 1%

Job Training

It has been suggested that the public schools be given the responsibility to set up special job training

programs for young people, age 15 to 18, who are out of work and out of school. Would you favor or oppose such a plan?

	Favor %	Oppose %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
NATIONAL TOTALS	86	11	3
Sex			
Men	84	13	3
Women	88	8	4
Race			
White	85	11	4
Nonwhite	93	5	2
Age			
18 to 29 years	89	9	2
30 to 49 years	83	13	4
50 years and over	87	9	4
Education			
Elementary grades	88	7	5
High school	86	10	4
College	84	14	2
Community size			
1 million and over	84	10	6
500,000 to 999,999	87	10	3
50,000 to 499,999	89	9	2
2,500 to 49,999	88	10	2
Under 2,500	82	13	5
Region			
East	86	10	4
Midwest	83	15	2
South	90	6	4
West	84	11	5

Nongraded Schools

Should a student be able to progress through the school system at his own speed and without regard to the usual grade levels? This would mean that he might study seventh-grade math, but only fifth-grade English. Would you favor or oppose such a plan in the local schools?

	Favor %	Oppose %	No Opinion %
NATIONAL TOTALS	64	28	8

Sex			
Men	62	30	8
Women	65	27	8
Race			
White	64	28	8
Nonwhite	62	32	6
Age			
18 to 29 years	65	28	7
30 to 49 years	65	29	6
50 years and over	61	28	11
Education			
Elementary grades	55	32	13
High school	64	28	8
College	69	26	5
Community size			
1 million and over	70	24	6
500,000 to 999,999	74	23	3
50,000 to 499,999	66	28	6
2,500 to 49,999	56	35	9
Under 2,500	58	29	13
Region			
East	65	28	7
Midwest	61	33	6
South	62	27	11
West	68	24	8

Instruction in Morals

Would you favor or oppose instruction in the schools that would deal with morals and moral behavior?

	Favor %	Oppose %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
NATIONAL TOTALS	79	15	6
Sex			
Men	77	16	7
Women	82	13	5
Race			
White	79	16	5
Nonwhite	84	9	7
Age			
18 to 29 years	68	26	6
30 to 49 years	84	12	4
50 years and over	83	10	7

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Education			
Elementary grades	82	10	8
High school	81	14	5
College	73	21	6
Community size			
1 million and over	78	17	5
500,000 to 999,999	84	11	5
50,000 to 499,999	79	16	5
2,500 to 49,999	75	17	8
Under 2,500	81	13	6
Region			
East	74	19	7
Midwest	81	15	4
South	84	10	6
West	78	15	7

Teacher Strikes

Should public school teachers be permitted to strike or not?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes, they should	45	45	45	42
No, they should not	48	47	49	52
Don't know/ no answer	7	8	6	6

Open School Concept

Do you happen to know what is meant by the "open" school concept or idea?

	Yes %	No %	Not Sure %
NATIONAL TOTALS	27	60	13
Sex			
Men	23	62	15
Women	30	58	12
Race			
White	28	58	14
Nonwhite	14	78	8

Age			
18 to 29 years	32	56	12
30 to 49 years	30	56	14
50 years and over	18	68	14
Education			
Elementary grades	7	82	11
High school	21	64	15
College	52	36	12
Community size			
1 million and over	25	61	14
500,000 to 999,999	28	61	11
50,000 to 499,999	30	59	11
2,500 to 49,999	26	59	15
Under 2,500	24	61	15
Region			
East	33	57	10
Midwest	26	58	16
South	19	68	13
West	28	58	14

COMPOSITION OF THE SAMPLE

	%
No children in schools	57
Public school parents	39*
Parochial school parents	7*

*Totals exceed 43% because some parents have children attending more than one kind of school.

Sex	%
Men	48
Women	52
	100

Age	%
18 to 24 years	16
25 to 29 years	10
30 to 49 years	40
50 years and over	34
	100

Income	%
$20,000 and over	17
$15,000 to $19,999	15
$10,000 to $14,999	26
$7,000 to $9,999	12
$5,000 to $6,999	10
$3,000 to $4,999	11
Under $2,999	7
Undesignated	2
	100

Occupation	%
Business & professional	22
Clerical & sales	11
Farm	3
Skilled labor	18
Unskilled labor	24
Non-labor force	18
Undesignated	4
	100

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Race	%
White	88
Nonwhite	12
	100

Political Affiliation	%
Republican	22
Democrat	42
Independent	34
Other	2
	100

Region	%
East	27
Midwest	28
South	27
West	18
	100

Community size	%
1 million and over	18
500,000 to 999,999	13
50,000 to 499,999	25
2,500 to 49,999	17
Under 2,500	27
	100

Religion	%
Protestant	62
Roman Catholic	26
Jewish	2
Others	10
	100

Education	%
Elementary grades	19
High school incomplete	16
High school complete	34
Technical, trade, or business school	5
College incomplete	14
College graduate	12
Undesignated	*
	100

*Less than 1%

Chapter 9

Eighth Annual Gallup Poll of Public Attitudes Toward Education — 1976

Purpose of the Study

The eighth annual survey of the series has attempted to measure the attitudes of Americans toward their public schools. Each year great care is taken to include new issues of concern to both educators and the public, as well as trend questions which have ongoing impact in the educational world.

This year's survey was funded by /I/D/E/A/, the Institute for Development of Educational Activities, Inc., an affiliate of the Charles F. Kettering Foundation. In prior years these studies have been sponsored by CFK Ltd. and the Ford Foundation.

To make certain that the current survey would embrace important issues in the field of education, a group of educators, together with the project directors from Gallup, met in Miami early this year to discuss and evaluate preliminary questions and possible themes.

The group of panel members included: James Betchkal, editor, *American School Board Journal*, National School Boards Association, Washington, D.C.; Edward Brainard, director, Leadership Development, Colorado Department of Education, Denver (now professor of education, University of Northern Colorado, Greeley); B. Frank Brown, division director, /I/D/E/A/, Melbourne, Florida; Stanley M. Elam, editor, *Phi Delta Kappan*, Bloomington, Indiana; William J.

Ellena, superintendent, Public Schools, Charlottesville, Virginia; Sidney P. Marland, Jr., president, College Entrance Examination Board, New York City; William Mitchell, superintendent, Public Schools, Greeley, Colorado; John W. Porter, state superintendent of public instruction, Department of Education, Lansing, Michigan; Samuel G. Sava, executive director, /I/D/E/A/, and vice president, Educational Activities, Charles F. Kettering Foundation, Dayton, Ohio; Suzanne Sepper, teacher, Bayview Elementary School, Fort Lauderdale, Florida; and M. Donald Thomas, superintendent of schools, Salt Lake City School District, Utah.

We wish to thank the above-mentioned individuals for their valuable suggestions.

Research Procedure

The Sample – The sample in this survey embraced a total of 1,549 adults (18 years and older). It is described as a modified probability sample of the nation. Personal, in-home interviewing was conducted in every area of the nation and in all types of communities. A full analysis of the sample will be found at the end of this report.

Time of Interviewing – The fieldwork for this study was carried out from April 21 through April 25, 1976.

The Interviewing Form – Questions included in the survey instrument were selected following extensive pretesting by the trained staff of interviewers maintained by the Gallup organizations.

Findings from this report apply only to the country as a whole and not to specific local communities. Local surveys, using the same questions, can be conducted to determine how local communities compare with the national norm.

Introduction

Aside from its historical significance, the year 1976 may well prove to be the turning point in the public's attitudes toward the public schools. Evidence from the present survey indicates a leveling off in the downward trend of recent years in the public's attitudes toward the public schools.

The public schools, like other public institutions, reflect the major trends in society. And the year 1976 has witnessed a nationwide shift toward more traditional values in almost every field.

Whether we have come to the end of the era of permissiveness is yet to be seen. The fact remains, however, that the public is now demanding stricter rules in dealing with the behavior of the young and higher standards in the public schools.

Juvenile delinquency, increasing yearly, has focused attention upon the need for moral education not only in the home but in the schools. Laws in many states are being changed to permit stiffer sentences for young offenders. We can hope that such laws, and new ways that are being tried in schools for dealing with the problem of discipline, will bring about a lessening of the turmoil found in so many cities.

A growing demand to place greater emphasis on the basics in the school curriculum is evidenced in the findings of the present survey. Meeting this demand could result in higher national test scores and increased respect for the public schools.

Major Problems Confronting The Public Schools in 1976

Discipline continues to head the list of major problems when a sample of the nation's adults cite what they perceive as the most important problems of the public schools in their own communities. In fact, discipline has been named most often seven times during the last eight years.

The percentage of respondents citing discipline as the number one problem, however, has shown no increase during recent years. Next to discipline, and in second place, are the problems associated with busing and integration. In third place this year is "lack of proper financial support." These were also named second and third, respectively, in last year's survey.

The one significant change from 1975 is the marked increase in the number of persons in the sample who cite "a poor curriculum." This complaint, listed seventh in importance last year, has moved up to fourth, undoubtedly because of wide publicity given to the drop in national test scores and growing concern about the number of functional illiterates among school leavers.

Below, in order of mentions, is the list of major problems of the local public schools as perceived by the residents of these communities:

1. Lack of discipline
2. Integration/segregation/busing
3. Lack of proper financial support
4. Poor curriculum
5. Use of drugs
6. Difficulty of getting "good" teachers
7. Parents' lack of interest
8. Size of school/classes
9. School board policies
10. Pupils' lack of interest

1976 Rating of the Public Schools

A five-point scale, familiar to the American public, was employed for the first time in 1974 to establish a base for measuring the public's perceptions of the quality of public school education in their own communities.

The question asked is this:

> **Students are often given the grades A,B,C,D, and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the *public* schools themselves, in this community, were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the public schools here – A,B,C,D, or FAIL?**

A significant drop in the public's ratings was recorded between the years 1974 and 1975. However, the decline has now leveled off, with ratings for 1976 being virtually the same as for 1975.

Here are the ratings given the public schools nationally for the last three years:

Ratings Given the Public Schools	National Totals 1976 %	1975 %	1974 %
A rating	13	13	18
B rating	29	30	30
C rating	28	28	21
D rating	10	9	6
FAIL	6	7	5
Don't know/no answer	14	13	20

If the top two positions – A and B – are combined, and the bottom three – C, D, and FAIL – are combined, the findings indicate that the lowest ratings come from those parents who send their children to private or parochial schools. Those with children in the public schools give the highest ratings to the schools, but even in the case of this group only 50% give the schools an A or B rating. This contrasts with only 34% of those whose children attend private or parochial schools who give an A or B rating.

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
A rating	13	12	16	6
B rating	29	26	34	28
C rating	28	26	30	40
D rating	10	9	10	12
FAIL	6	7	5	4
Don't know/ no answer	14	20	5	10

When ratings given by the major socioeconomic and demographic groups are analyzed, it is evident that the people who are least satisfied with the quality of education offered in their local schools are the recent graduates, the 18 to 29 age group, those who live in the center cities as opposed to the suburbs, and citizens who live in the Western states.

	A %	B %	C %	D %	FAIL %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
NATIONAL TOTALS	13	29	28	10	6	14
Sex						
Men	11	32	28	11	4	14
Women	14	27	29	9	7	14

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Race						
White	13	30	28	9	6	14
Nonwhite	10	21	33	13	9	14
Age						
18 to 29 years	8	25	33	15	6	13
30 to 49 years	15	30	30	10	5	10
50 years and over	15	31	22	6	7	19
Education						
Grade school	18	22	27	8	5	20
High school	12	27	30	11	7	13
College	11	37	25	9	6	12
Community size						
1 million and over	11	27	32	13	6	11
500,000 – 999,999	11	34	21	13	7	14
50,000 – 499,999	10	26	32	11	10	11
2,500 – 49,999	13	33	25	8	2	19
Under 2,500	17	29	28	6	4	16
Central City	7	21	32	16	11	12
Suburbs	14	34	28	7	5	12
All other	16	30	27	7	3	17
Region						
East	11	31	29	10	5	14
Midwest	16	32	27	8	4	13
South	13	27	29	9	7	15
West	10	24	30	15	8	13

How To Improve the Quality Of the Public Schools

After having obtained ratings of their public schools by different groups, our interviewers sought to determine what could be done, in the opinion of respondents, to improve the quality of local education. And as an aid, each respondent was handed a card listing a dozen suggestions and had the opportunity to choose as many as he or she wished.

Answers to this question correspond closely with those given in answer to the question concerning the most important problems faced by the local schools.

This approach sheds further light on the public's current concern that the schools should "devote more attention to teaching of basic skills." This is the most popular suggestion; 51% of all respondents chose it. Close behind – in fact, with virtually the same number of choices – is the suggestion to "enforce stricter discipline."

The proposals that get the third and fourth highest number of mentions are to "meet individual needs of students," with 42%, and to "improve parent/school relations," with 41%.

The top three choices of parents whose children now attend the public schools are the same as the top three of the general public. Oddly enough, parents place even higher on their list, in fourth place, "instruction in morals" – which has been generally regarded as the sole responsibility of home and church.

The question:

Which of these ways do you think would do most to *improve* the quality of public school education overall?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Devote more attention to teaching of basic skills	51	47	55	60
Enforce stricter discipline	50	47	52	64
Meet individual needs of students	42	39	47	44
Improve parent/school relations	41	43	36	47
Emphasize moral development	39	34	45	49
Emphasize career education and development of salable skills	38	39	36	37
Provide opportunities for teachers to keep up to date regarding new methods	29	27	32	29
Raise academic standards	27	28	23	38
Raise teachers' salaries	14	15	16	8
Increase amount of homework	14	12	17	21

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Build new buildings	9	8	12	7
Lower age for compulsory attendance	5	4	6	1
None	1	1	*	
Don't know/ no answer	4	4	2	3

*Less than 1%
(Totals add to more than 100% because of multiple answers.)

Nationwide Test for Graduation

A consensus was found in favor of requiring high school students to pass a standard examination in order to receive a diploma.

Present survey findings on this question show a substantial shift in the public's attitude during the last 18 years. The question posed in 1958 by the Gallup Poll is the same one as that used in the 1976 survey, as follows:

> **Should all high school students in the United States be required to pass a standard nationwide examination in order to get a high school diploma?**

The findings for the two surveys show:

	National Test for Graduation	
	1976	1958
	%	%
In favor of such a test	65	50
Opposed	31	39
No opinion	4	11

It is the least well educated, strangely enough, who are most in favor of such a requirement. The same finding was reported in the 1958 study. Those who have had the advantage of one or more years of college education are much more evenly divided: 53% are in favor, 44% opposed. Those with a grade school education vote 76% in favor, 18% opposed.

Persons who are in the 18 to 29 age bracket are less enthusiastic than older persons, possibly because some may believe that such a test would have deprived them of their own diplomas.

Apart from these differences, the survey findings show that a majority favors such a requirement in all sections of the nation and in the large cities as well as the small towns.

Results by major groups:

	Yes, They Should %	No, They Should Not %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
NATIONAL TOTALS	65	31	4
Sex			
Men	66	31	3
Women	65	30	5
Race			
White	65	31	4
Nonwhite	67	27	6
Age			
18 to 29 years	56	41	3
30 to 49 years	67	30	3
50 years and over	71	23	6
Education			
Grade school	76	18	6
High school	69	27	4
College	53	44	3
Community size			
1 million and over	70	25	5
500,000 – 999,999	69	28	3
50,000 – 499,999	67	31	2
2,500 – 49,999	68	31	1
Under 2,500	58	35	7
Region			
East	65	31	4
Midwest	66	30	4
South	64	31	5
West	67	31	2

The Public's Conclusions from the Decline in National Test Scores

The American people, judging from present and past survey data, do not share the skepticism of many educators about the significance of standardized tests.

They believe, for example, that the decline in national test scores in recent years means that the quality of education today is declining. Of course, the test scores may only confirm what many already think about the schools.

There is surprising unanimity among all groups in the population that the tests are actually measuring a decline in the quality of education. By majorities of about 2-1, all segments of the population, in all areas of the nation, believe that the tests are correctly assessing the situation.

The first question asked was:

> **Do you believe that a decline in national test scores of students in recent years means that the quality of education today is declining?**

The results by major groups:

	Quality of Education		
	Yes, Is Declining %	No, Is Not %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
NATIONAL TOTALS	59	31	10
Sex			
Men	61	31	8
Women	58	31	11
Race			
White	60	31	9
Nonwhite	58	29	13
Age			
18 to 29 years	52	40	8
30 to 49 years	62	29	9
50 years and over	63	26	11
Education			
Grade school	54	25	21
High school	61	29	10
College	58	39	3
Community size			
1 million and over	67	28	5
500,000 – 999,999	64	29	7
50,000 – 499,999	62	29	9
2,500 – 49,999	58	33	9
Under 2,500	50	34	16
Region			
East	62	26	12
Midwest	56	38	6
South	56	31	13
West	66	27	7

All respondents were then asked to explain what they thought brought about the decline in test scores. Each was handed a card listing eight reasons, including one for the doubters reading, "The tests are not reliable."

The second question put to respondents was:

> **Here are some reasons that have been given to explain the decline in national test scores. Will you look over these reasons and then tell me which ones you think are most responsible for this decline.**

Respondents, who were permitted to choose more than one reason for the decline in test scores, voted in this manner:

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
1. Less parent attention, concern, and supervision of the child	65	64	65	72
2. Students aren't as motivated to do well	52	50	57	53
3. Too much television viewing	49	48	51	51
4. Society is becoming too permissive	49	47	49	61
5. Teachers are giving less attention to students	39	39	41	32
6. It's easier to get into college now	16	20	10	14
7. Schools are expanding the number of courses offered	10	12	8	4
8. The tests are not reliable	16	15	16	16
Other and no opinion	14	13	15	15

Overall, the public places the greatest blame for declining test scores on parents, on society, on children's lack of motivation, and on too much television viewing. Interestingly, parents of children now attending school most often cite the very same top reason for declining scores: "less parent attention, concern, and supervision." Parents themselves are readily accepting the blame and are not trying to place the burden on the schools, as one might expect them to do.

Career Education

The demand for more emphasis on career education continues to be strongly voiced throughout the nation. In almost every study, the public has made known its belief that public school education should train graduates for jobs.

There is obviously confusion in the public's thinking about what constitutes career education and the kind of skills needed in today's society. What does emerge from the various surveys that have covered this point is that the public believes that the public schools should prepare every student to take some kind of job after graduation if he wants to end schooling at this stage of his or her life.

This first question was asked of all respondents:

> **Do you think that the school curriculum should give more emphasis, or less emphasis, to careers and career preparation in high school?**

Because the public sees many unemployed and unskilled young people, it is quite natural and logical to reach the conclusion that the schools they attended do not give enough attention to job training. What is likely to be overlooked is the need today for persons with language and mathematical skills as well as mechanical skills. In the current survey, 80% say more emphasis should be given to careers in high school.

A second question asked if more information about careers should be given in the elementary schools. Although the majority is small, the number who say this should be done is greater than the number who say this is not necessary.

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
More emphasis	80	80	80	84
Less emphasis	5	4	5	7
About the same as now	11	12	11	8
Don't know/ no answer	4	4	4	1

The second question:

Do you think the elementary school curriculum should, or should not, include information about jobs and careers?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Should	52	52	53	47
Should not	39	38	38	48
Don't know/ no answer	9	10	9	5

Early School-Leaving Age

Some educators see very real advantages in permitting students who meet minimum requirements to leave school early, either to take jobs or to enter junior or community colleges. California has such a law at this time permitting students to leave school early.*

In many instances this practice would rid the school of students who are disruptive and who have no interest in continuing their education. On the other hand, it would permit bright students to start their college careers at an earlier age.

The public, however, has never responded favorably toward proposals for changing present regulations about school age. When questions bearing upon this issue have

*Among the nearly one million youngsters in California's public high schools, 30,500 took a test last year authorized by this law and 11,350 passed it. State department officials do not know, however, how many of those passing the test actually left school early.

been asked in these surveys, most respondents show reluctance to change the rules now in effect in their communities, either in respect to leaving age or the age at which children start school.

The public has been found willing to provide special schools and special training for students who are unable to keep up with their classes, and other national surveys reveal a willingness to establish training camps on the order of the Civilian Conservation Corps of the 1930s. But without some such provision for training and supervision, the public disapproves of letting young people out of school before they reach the legal minimum age.

Parents with children in public school turn down the proposal by a ratio of 69% to 28%. Those with children in the parochial schools like the idea even less. They oppose it by a ratio of 73% to 26%.

The question asked was:

> **Currently some states are considering legislation which will permit students to leave school as early as age 14 if they can first pass a test showing that they can read, write, and figure with sufficient skill to get along. Those who pass the test and leave school can take jobs if they wish or go on to community college at an earlier age. Do you approve or disapprove of such a plan for letting students leave school at a younger age?**

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Approve	30	33	28	26
Disapprove	66	63	69	73
Don't know/ no answer	4	4	3	1

There is close agreement in all segments of society; the vote in nearly every group is about 2-1 against. Greatest support for this plan of lowering the age of compulsory attendance comes from those with the least education. But even this group opposes the idea by a vote of 52% to 41%.

The results by major groups:

	Approve %	Disapprove %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
NATIONAL TOTALS	30	66	4
Sex			
Men	34	63	3
Women	27	69	4
Race			
White	30	67	3
Nonwhite	35	57	8
Age			
18 to 29 years	34	62	4
30 to 49 years	29	68	3
50 years and over	29	66	5
Education			
Grade school	41	52	7
High school	26	70	4
College	32	66	2
Community size			
1 million and over	33	64	3
500,000 – 999,999	33	64	3
50,000 – 499,999	31	66	3
2,500 – 49,999	33	66	1
Under 2,500	25	69	6
Region			
East	29	66	5
Midwest	28	69	3
South	33	63	4
West	33	65	2

Courses To Help Parents Help Their Children in School

For many decades, teachers and parents have tacitly accepted something akin to a "territorial imperative." The province of the school was not to be invaded by parents; conversely, the province of the home was off limits to teachers.

This arrangement is rapidly falling apart as it becomes apparent that the schools cannot function properly unless parents cooperate with teachers, and unless teachers give guidance to parents.

It is obvious to parents, and to the public at large, that a new kind of shared responsibility must be accepted if students are to gain most from their education.

Both the public and parents have shown their willingness in many previous surveys to work more closely with the schools. What has been lacking is a *modus operandi*. The proposal presented to respondents in the 1976 survey offers one way that the schools can help parents.

Many good ideas for improving education are turned down because they require higher taxes. The real test, therefore, of how much the public really supports a given proposal is to find out if the people who favor it are willing to have their taxes increased in order to put the proposal into effect.

In the case of the proposal to offer courses for parents as part of the regular public school system, those who favor the idea are also ready to accept a tax increase by a ratio of 51% to 21%.

The first question asked:

> **As a regular part of the public school educational system, it has been suggested that courses be offered at convenient times to parents in order to help them help their children in school. Do you think this is a good idea or a poor idea?**

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Good idea	77	76	78	74
Poor idea	19	18	20	25
Don't know/ no answer	4	6	2	1

And of those who approved the idea, this additional question was asked:

> **Would you be willing to pay additional taxes to support such a program?**

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes	51	50	52	50
No	21	21	21	24
Don't know/ no answer	5	5	5	

The most interesting finding when the results are analyzed is that the youngest age group – those from 18 to 29 years old – overwhelmingly supports the idea, and by a greater margin than the older age groups. Parents of children in the public schools vote 78% to 20% in favor of the proposal.

The results by major groups:

	Good Idea %	Poor Idea %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
NATIONAL TOTALS	77	19	4
Sex			
Men	77	20	3
Women	77	18	5
Race			
White	76	20	4
Nonwhite	84	7	9
Age			
18 to 29 years	83	13	4
30 to 49 years	79	18	3
50 years and over	70	23	7
Education			
Grade school	70	20	10
High school	77	19	4
College	81	17	2
Community size			
1 million and over	80	13	7
500,000 – 999,999	80	18	2
50,000 – 499,999	80	18	2
2,500 – 49,999	74	24	2
Under 2,500	72	21	7
Region			
East	76	18	6
Midwest	73	23	4
South	82	13	5
West	75	22	3

Citizen Advisory Committees

School board members and teachers often complain about the lack of citizen interest in school matters. Lack of knowledge about the problems of the schools, especially the financial problems, all too often results in the defeat of school budgets and school bonds.

Both school and community gain when citizens take an active interest in the schools, but without a way to engage the interest and to involve citizens in school problems, nothing much happens. A few individuals will attend school board meetings. The fact remains, however, that persons in the community who could make the greatest contribution to education have almost no meaningful way to participate.

School boards are typically too busy dealing with financial and staff problems to spend much time on the many educational matters which must be dealt with today. Appointment of citizen advisory committees by the school board offers a practical way – and judging from the survey results, a popular way – to enlist the interest of an amazing number of persons in the community.

That this plan, now followed in some communities, offers great opportunities to involve citizens in the problems of the schools is fully evidenced by the results of the present survey.

The question asked was:

> **Some school boards have appointed citizen advisory committees to deal with a number of school problems such as discipline, the curriculum, textbook selection, teacher evaluation, the athletic program, and the like. The committees report their findings to the school board for possible action. If such a plan were adopted here (or exists here), which of these problems would *you* most like to deal with on a citizen advisory committee?**

Only 10% of all those questioned said they would *not* like to serve on such a committee or could not make up their minds. While many of the other 90% who chose committees on which they would like to serve might find it impossible or impractical to carry out their intention still an extraordinary number of persons in a typical community are sufficiently interested to fill places on a score of committees. And, if such committees were appointed, then hundreds of citizens might be involved in local school matters.

Each person interviewed in the survey was handed a card which listed 20 committees. He was asked if he would like to serve on any one; in fact, he could choose as many as he wished.

The following list shows the percentage of respondents selecting each committee as one on which he would like to serve:

Advisory Committees	Percent Who Would Like To Serve on Such a Committee*
1. Discipline and related problems	47
2. Student/teacher relations	31
3. Career education	29
4. Student dropouts	29
5. Teacher evaluation	28
6. The handicapped student	26
7. Educational costs/finances	22
8. The curriculum	21
9. Education for citizenship	19
10. Work-study programs	19
11. Home study and work habits	19
12. Community use of school buildings	16
13. Pupil assessment and test results	15
14. School facilities	14
15. Public relations of schools	13
16. School transportation	12
17. The athletic program	12
18. Educational innovations	12
19. Extracurricular activities	11
20. Progress of recent graduates	9
None	4
Don't know/no answer	6

*Totals exceed 100% due to multiple answers by respondents.

Qualities Most Important In Development of a Child

In a society that constantly changes, the qualities that should be developed in its children will change also. What qualities do Americans today regard as most important? Which should be given the most attention by parents and schools? Which are the most neglected?

To shed light on these concerns, the following question was included in the survey:

> **Of course all of the qualities listed on this card are important in the overall development of a child. But which *one* do you regard as the *most* important?**

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
1. Learning to think for oneself	26	26	26	23
2. Ability to get along with others	23	25	20	20
3. Willingness to accept responsibility	21	19	21	26
4. High moral standards	13	11	15	20
5. Eagerness to learn	11	10	13	10
6. Desire to excel	4	6	3	1
Don't know/ no answer	2	3	2	·

All respondents were offered the opportunity to make a second choice among these six qualities. When the second choices are added to the first choices, then "willingness to accept responsibility" moves up to second place, displacing "ability to get along with others," which drops to third place.

Looking at the same list of qualities, respondents were asked:

> **Which one do you think is most neglected by parents today?**

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
1. High moral standards	32	29	36	44
2. Willingness to accept responsibility	30	33	29	23
3. Learning to think for oneself	14	15	11	14
4. Ability to get along with others	8	7	9	7
5. Eagerness to learn	5	4	5	2
6. Desire to excel	4	3	5	5
Don't know/ no answer	7	9	5	5

And as a final question in this series:

And which one do you think is most neglected by schools?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
1. High moral standards	26	24	28	26
2. Learning to think for oneself	15	15	14	11
3. Eagerness to learn	13	14	12	15
4. Willingness to accept responsibility	12	13	10	20
5. Desire to excel	9	8	12	11
6. Ability to get along with others	8	9	8	5
Don't know/ no answer	17	17	16	12

Local Responsibility for Education

The American public is greatly opposed to giving up local responsibility for the public schools, no matter what the encroachments of the state and federal governments. Of course, the state and federal governments, by tying policies to financial grants, can continue to exert much influence on education. But the public, nevertheless, still holds to the principle that local school policies should be set by local school boards.

The question:

Local school policies are set, not only by the local school board, but also by the state government and the federal government. In the years ahead, would you like to see the local school board have greater responsibility in running the schools, or less, than they do today?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Greater responsibility	67	65	67	70
Less responsibility	10	11	10	7
About the same	15	15	17	14
Don't know/ no answer	8	9	6	9

Personal Qualities Desired in Teachers

Just as the school curriculum should change with changing needs, it could be argued that the qualities required of teachers should also change. What do people today regard as the most important qualities in the ideal teacher?

All respondents were asked the following "open" question:

Suppose you could choose your child's teachers. Assuming they all had about the same experience and training, what *personal* qualities would you look for?

The qualities named by respondents most often, in order of mention:

1. The ability to communicate, to understand, to relate
2. The ability to discipline, be firm and fair
3. The ability to inspire, motivate the child
4. High moral character
5. Love of children, concern for them
6. Dedication to teaching profession, enthusiasm
7. Friendly, good personality
8. Good personal appearance, cleanliness

All major groups list the qualities most desired in a teacher in almost exactly this same order.

The ideal teacher, in effect, is one who becomes a model of behavior for the young. It is not startling to discover this; a survey 100 years ago would probably have revealed the same thing.

How the Public Feels About Unionization of Teachers

Whether teachers should join unions has been a highly controversial issue in many areas of the United States for many years. At present, most U.S. teachers belong to unions or associations that bargain over salaries and working conditions. The question arises as to how the American public currently appraises this situation. Has unionization helped or hurt public school education? This is the question that was put to the public; there was a mixed reaction.

The question:

> **Most teachers in the nation now belong to unions or associations that bargain over salaries, working conditions, and the like. Has unionization, in your opinion, helped, hurt, or made no difference in the *quality* of public school education in the United States?**

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Helped	22	22	23	24
Hurt	38	38	36	47
Made no difference	27	26	28	25
Don't know/ no answer	13	14	13	4

Older persons are much more likely to say that unionization has diminished the quality of education. The 18 to 29 age group is almost evenly divided. In the bigger cities, where unions tend to be more militant, a slightly greater number say that unionization has "hurt."

Here are the findings among major groups:

	Helped %	Hurt %	Made No Difference %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
NATIONAL TOTALS	22	38	27	13
Sex				
Men	24	42	25	9

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Women	21	34	29	16
Race				
White	21	39	28	12
Nonwhite	26	31	22	21
Age				
18 to 29 years	26	30	34	10
30 to 49 years	24	37	26	13
50 years and over	16	46	23	15
Education				
Grade school	18	39	25	18
High school	20	37	30	13
College	29	40	23	8
Community size				
1 million and over	17	40	34	9
500,000 – 999,999	27	38	26	9
50,000 – 499,999	25	39	27	9
2,500 – 49,999	22	37	26	15
Under 2,500	20	36	24	20
Region				
East	20	43	28	9
Midwest	19	40	29	12
South	27	33	23	17
West	23	37	28	12

Extending the Scope of Teacher Bargaining

School boards generally are vested with the responsibility for making decisions with respect to such matters as class size, the curriculum, and teaching methods. The public, in the present survey, has shown its readiness to make these matters subject to bargaining. Whether the school boards will eventually accept this view remains to be seen.

The question asked was:

> **Some teacher groups want to extend their bargaining powers beyond pay and working conditions. They would like to have the right to negotiate about class size, the curriculum, and teaching methods. Would you favor or oppose giving them these added rights?**

This is one of the few survey questions in which a significant difference is found between the views of men and women. Men were almost evenly divided on the issue and women favored the change by a vote of 56% to 33%.

Age also makes a great difference. The youngest adult group voted 73% to 21% for extending the scope of teachers' bargaining powers; those over 50 oppose it by a vote of 50% to 38%.

Persons living in the West are almost evenly divided on this issue; those in the Midwest are most in favor of granting wider bargaining rights to teachers.

The findings among major groups:

	Favor %	Oppose %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
NATIONAL TOTALS	52	39	9
Sex			
Men	47	45	8
Women	56	33	11
Race			
White	51	41	8
Nonwhite	62	21	17
Age			
18 to 29 years	73	21	6
30 to 49 years	49	42	9
50 years and over	38	50	12
Education			
Grade school	47	34	19
High school	49	42	9
College	59	37	4
Community size			
1 million and over	54	38	8
500,000 – 999,999	57	36	7
50,000 – 499,999	56	36	8
2,500 – 49,999	49	44	7
Under 2,500	46	41	13
Region			
East	51	39	10
Midwest	55	39	6
South	52	34	14
West	48	46	6

Reducing School Costs

With city budgets being squeezed everywhere in the nation, school budgets are being examined critically to see where costs can be cut.

To see which, if any, reductions meet with public acceptance, a list of eight different ways by which budgets could be cut was presented in this survey. Respondents were asked to give their opinion about each one.

The results are quite similar to those yielded by the 1971 survey. In that year, the public voted in favor, 50% to 32%, of reducing the number of administrative personnel. This year the vote is overwhelmingly in favor, 72% to 19%.*

In fact, parents of children attending public and parochial schools, as well as those with no children in school, all give their approval to reducing the number of administrative personnel.

The question:

> **Suppose your local school board were "forced" to cut some things from school costs because there is not enough money. I am going to read you a list of many ways that have been suggested for reducing school costs. Will you tell me, in the case of each one, whether your opinion is favorable or unfavorable.**

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
1. Reduce the number of administrative personnel				
Favorable	72	71	71	80
Unfavorable	19	18	21	15
No opinion	9	11	8	5
2. Reduce the number of counselors on the staff				
Favorable	52	51	54	50
Unfavorable	38	36	38	45
No opinion	10	13	8	5
3. Reduce the number of subjects offered				
Favorable	39	39	38	49

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*Gallup's interviewers do not venture information to respondents. For example, they were not permitted to explain that teacher salaries typically constitute some 80% of a district's total operating expenses. In many larger districts, increasing class size by only one student could "save" more money than the elimination of 60% of the administrative staff. – *The Editor*

Unfavorable	53	52	56	50
No opinion	8	9	6	1
4. Cut out the twelfth grade by covering in three years what is now covered in four				
Favorable	36	38	34	43
Unfavorable	58	54	63	56
No opinion	6	8	3	1
5. Cut out after-school activities like bands, clubs, athletics, etc.				
Favorable	31	29	33	38
Unfavorable	63	64	63	58
No opinion	6	7	4	4
6. Reduce the number of teachers by increasing class sizes				
Favorable	23	26	21	16
Unfavorable	70	66	74	80
No opinion	7	8	5	4
7. Cut all teachers' salaries by a set percentage				
Favorable	18	19	17	16
Unfavorable	74	72	77	78
No opinion	8	9	6	6
8. Reduce special services such as speech, reading, and hearing therapy				
Favorable	10	8	12	7
Unfavorable	85	86	84	89
No opinion	5	6	4	4

Declining School Enrollments

Many school districts have found that, because of decreasing birthrates, school enrollments are down and may decline even further in the decade ahead.

In situations such as this, the question arises as to whether to reduce educational expenditures accordingly. The public, as the results show here, votes in favor of reducing expenditures.

The question:

School enrollments in many parts of the nation have declined because of a lower birthrate. If this were to happen here, would you suggest that school expenditures be reduced accordingly?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes	55	58	52	51
No	35	31	38	42
Don't know/ no answer	10	11	10	7

When those who said that expenditures should be reduced accordingly were asked to give their views as to what expenditures could be cut in this situation, the greatest number suggested that "the number of teachers should be reduced." Next in number of mentions was "close schools and combine classes." Others gave a miscellany of suggestions, including reducing athletic programs, extracurricular activities, and supplies.

Responsibility for Moral Behavior

The American people have reached the conclusion that many parents either won't or can't control the behavior of their children. They are ready, therefore, to turn over part of the responsibility to the schools. In the 1975 survey it was reported that 79% of all those questioned favored instruction in morals and moral behavior in the schools. Only 15% opposed the idea. It was also pointed out in the same report that parents of children now in school were, of all groups, most in favor of this instruction.

In the present survey, a sizable majority of those questioned want part of the responsibility for moral behavior turned over to the schools. Just how this can be done raises many issues. A hundred years ago, McGuffey's Readers pointed up a moral in almost every paragraph. Thousands of years ago, parables and folk stories performed this service. The modern equivalent may be the "case history," as discussed in the 1975 report.

The question:

Parents now have responsibility for the moral behavior of their children. Do you think that the schools should take on a share of this responsibility, or not?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes, schools should take on share of responsibility	67	65	69	69
No, they should not	30	31	29	26
Don't know/ no answer	3	4	2	5

Attitudes Toward Juvenile Courts

The American public is dissatisfied with the workings of juvenile courts. Only 6% say these courts are doing an "excellent" job; on the other hand, 41% say they are doing a "poor" job.

In cities of over one million population, a majority – 53% – say the job being done by juvenile courts is "poor." Both whites and nonwhites register dissatisfaction with these courts.

Overhaul of the laws dealing with juvenile delinquency is going on in many states, and these reforms may, in time, not only bring a halt to the increasing amount of juvenile crime but improve the teaching climate of the public schools.

The question:

In your opinion, how good a job do the juvenile courts do here in dealing with young people who violate the law – an excellent job, a fair job, or a poor job?

	Excellent Job %	Fair Job %	Poor Job %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
NATIONAL TOTALS	6	37	41	16
Sex				
Men	5	37	46	12
Women	7	37	36	20

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Race				
White	6	36	40	18
Nonwhite	8	40	43	9
Age				
18 to 29 years	4	45	39	12
30 to 49 years	6	35	41	18
50 years and over	7	32	42	19
Education				
Grade school	10	29	45	16
High school	6	39	39	16
College	4	38	41	17
Community size				
1 million and over	8	29	53	10
500,000 – 999,999	6	39	40	15
50,000 – 499,999	5	39	39	17
2,500 – 49,999	7	43	31	19
Under 2,500	5	35	41	19
Region				
East	6	30	54	10
Midwest	8	45	33	14
South	5	42	31	22
West	4	27	48	21

Live-in Boarding Schools For Children with Bad Home Conditions

Lack of parental interest and responsibility is blamed for the failure of many children to perform in a satisfactory manner in school. In fact, home conditions can be so bad today that children from these homes are almost certain to present a great and continuing problem to the schools.

One proposal for dealing with this problem is to put such children, who cannot function in a regular school setting, in live-in boarding schools. Here more attention could be given to them and to their educational needs.

While this proposal is approved by nearly four persons in 10, the public is not ready to take on the added financial burden which it thinks would be involved.

The question asked:

> **Some children have such bad home conditions that they run away or are unable to function in the regular public school. Should live-in boarding schools be provided at public expense for these children?**

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes, should be provided	39	41	38	35
No, should not be provided	50	46	54	60
Don't know/ no answer	11	13	8	5

Child-Care Centers As Part of the Public School System

The public is not yet ready to have the public school system embrace child-care centers, although the vote on this proposal is close – 46% in favor, 49% opposed, with 5% having no opinion.

The greatest vote of approval comes from nonwhites. They vote 76% in favor to 15% opposed. Persons in the 18 to 29 age group also favor the plan by a vote of 64% to 32%. Most opposed are older persons and those who live in the small communities.

The question:

> **A proposal has been made to make child-care centers available for all preschool children as part of the public school system. This program would be supported by taxes. Would you favor or oppose such a program in your school district?**

The response by major groups:

	Favor %	Oppose %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
NATIONAL TOTALS	46	49	5
Sex			
Men	46	49	5
Women	46	49	5
Race			
White	42	53	5
Nonwhite	76	15	9
Age			
18 to 29 years	64	32	4
30 to 49 years	43	52	5

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50 years and over	35	59	6
Education			
Grade school	45	46	9
High school	47	49	4
College	46	51	3
Community size			
1 million and over	57	40	3
500,000 – 999,999	50	44	6
50,000 – 499,999	48	48	4
2,500 – 49,999	43	51	6
Under 2,500	36	57	7
Region			
East	48	47	5
Midwest	38	59	3
South	52	40	8
West	45	51	4

FURTHER BREAKDOWNS

Detailed or different breakdowns of some of the responses to the 1976 poll questions are provided in this section as a supplement to tables already presented.

The Major Problems

What do you think are the biggest problems with which the *public* schools in this community must deal?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Lack of discipline	22	20	25	30
Integration/segregation/busing	15	16	13	19
Lack of proper financial support	14	14	14	11
Poor curriculum	14	14	13	18
Use of drugs	11	11	12	7
Difficulty of getting "good" teachers	11	9	14	9
Parents' lack of interest	5	5	4	4

Size of school/ classes	5	4	5	4
School board policies	3	2	3	3
Pupils' lack of interest	3	4	2	1
Lack of proper facilities	2	1	14	2
Crime/vandalism	2	3	2	1
Communication problems	1	1	1	3
There are no problems	3	2	6	1
Miscellaneous	8	9	8	2
Don't know/ no answer	12	16	7	10

(Totals add to more than 100% because of multiple answers.)

National Test for Graduation

Should all high school students in the United States be required to pass a standard examination in order to get a high school diploma?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes, they should	65	65	66	64
No, they should not	31	30	30	35
Don't know/ no answer	4	5	4	1

National Test Scores

Do you believe that a decline in national test scores of students in recent years means that the quality of education today is declining?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes, is declining	59	60	58	64
No, is not	31	30	32	28
Don't know/ no answer	10	10	10	8

Extending the Scope of Teacher Bargaining

Some teacher groups want to extend their bargaining powers beyond pay and working conditions. They would like to have the right to negotiate about class size, the curriculum, and teaching methods. Would you favor or oppose giving them these added rights?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Favor	52	51	54	53
Oppose	39	38	38	43
Don't know/ no answer	9	11	8	4

Juvenile Courts

In your opinion, how good a job do the juvenile courts do here in dealing with young people who violate the law – an excellent job, a fair job, or a poor job?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Excellent job	6	5	6	10
Fair job	37	35	40	38
Poor job	41	44	38	34
Don't know/ no answer	16	16	16	18

Child-Care Centers

A proposal has been made to make child-care centers available for all preschool children as part of the public school system. This program would be supported by taxes. Would you favor or oppose such a program in your school district?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Favor	46	47	44	39

Oppose	49	46	53	59
Don't know/ no answer	5	7	3	2

COMPOSITION OF THE SAMPLE

No children in schools	57%
Public school parents	38%*
Parochial school parents	8%*

*Totals exceed 43% because some parents have children attending more than one kind of school.

	%
Sex	
Men	48
Women	52
Race	
White	88
Nonwhite	12
Religion	
Protestant	56
Roman Catholic	30
Jewish	2
Others	12
Age	
18 to 24 years	17
25 to 29 years	11
30 to 49 years	39
50 years and over	33
Occupation	
Business & professional	22
Clerical & sales	10
Farm	3
Skilled labor	20
Unskilled labor	22
Non-labor force	18
Undesignated	5
Income	
$20,000 and over	22
$15,000 to $19,999	18
$10,000 to $14,999	23
$ 7,000 to $ 9,999	9
$ 5,000 to $ 6,999	9
$ 3,000 to $ 4,999	10

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Under $3,000	7
Undesignated	2
Political Affiliation	
Republican	21
Democrat	45
Independent	32
Other	2
Region	
East	27
Midwest	27
South	28
West	18
Community size	
1 million and over	19
500,000 – 999,999	12
50,000 – 499,999	25
2,500 – 49,999	17
Under 2,500	27
Education	
Elementary grades	16
High school incomplete	16
High school complete	33
Technical, trade, or business school	6
College incomplete	14
College graduate	15
Undesignated	*

*Less than 1%

Chapter 10

Ninth Annual Gallup Poll of Public Attitudes Toward Education — 1977

Purpose of the Study

This survey, ninth in the annual series, has sought to measure the attitudes of American citizens toward their public schools. Funding this year was provided by /I/D/E/A/, the Institute for Development of Educational Activities, Inc., an affiliate of the Charles F. Kettering Foundation.

Each year an effort is made to deal with new issues – as well as with certain perennials from earlier studies – that are of greatest concern to both educators and the public. To accomplish this, letters were sent to educators nationwide, asking for their ideas. In addition, a selected panel of citizens met with staff members of Gallup and /I/D/E/A/ to pinpoint issues for inclusion in this year's survey.

The group of panel members included: Terrel H. Bell, commissioner, Utah System of Higher Education, Salt Lake City, Utah (and former U.S. commissioner of education); Edward Brainard, chairman, Colorado State Committee, North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, Colorado; B. Frank Brown, director, /I/D/E/A/ Information and Services Program, Melbourne, Florida; Alonzo A. Crim, superintendent, Atlanta Public Schools, Atlanta, Georgia; Joseph M. Cronin, superintendent of public instruction, State Department of Public Instruction, Springfield, Illinois; Stanley Elam, director of publications, Phi Delta Kappa, Bloomington, Indiana;

Nolan Estes, general superintendent, Dallas Independent School District, Dallas, Texas; Jack D. Gordon, senator, Thirty-fifth District, Florida, Miami Beach, Florida; Samuel Halperin, director, Institute for Educational Leadership, Washington, D.C.; James E. Kunde, director of urban affairs, Charles F. Kettering Foundation, Dayton, Ohio; Sidney P. Marland, Jr., president, College Entrance Examination Board, New York, New York; Helen Moore, teacher, Detroit, Michigan; Samuel G. Sava, executive director, /I/D/E/A/, Dayton, Ohio.

We wish to thank these individuals for their valuable help.

Research Procedure

The Sample. The sample used in this and every survey in this series is described as a modified probability sample. A total of 1,506 adults (18 years and older) comprised the national cross section. Personal, in-home interviews were conducted in all areas of the nation and in all types of communities. A complete analysis of the sample appears at the end of this report.

Time of Interviewing. The fieldwork for this study was conducted from April 28 through May 2, 1977.

The Interviewing Form. All questions included in the survey were pretested by the staff of interviewers maintained by the Gallup organizations.

Findings from this report apply only to the country as a whole and not to specific local areas. Local surveys, using the same questions, can be conducted in order to compare local communities with the national norm.

Major Problems Confronting the Public Schools in 1977

Discipline continues to top the list of major problems facing the public schools of the nation, as it has during eight of the last nine years. In fact, the percentage who cite discipline as the major problem is the highest found during the period in which these annual surveys have been conducted.

Parents of children now attending public school, perhaps the group best suited to judge the schools, cite discipline as the number one problem and by the highest percentage yet recorded.

The problem that seems near solution is the problem of adequate facilities. Nine years ago "lack of proper facilities" drew enough votes to place it second on the list of major problems facing the schools. In this year's survey, for the second straight year, only 2% of the sample cite this as the major problem.

The list of problems remains substantially the same as in previous years, with integration/segregation/busing being in second place, and lack of proper financial support in third.

The problem of drug usage is mentioned by fewer persons than last year, going from 11% in 1976 to 4% this year.

Below, in order of mentions, is the list of top problems:

1. Lack of discipline
2. Integration/segregation/busing
3. Lack of proper financial support
4. Difficulty of getting "good" teachers
5. Poor curriculum
6. Use of drugs
7. Parents' lack of interest
8. Size of school/classes
9. Teachers' lack of interest
10. Mismanagement of funds/programs

1977 Ratings of the Public Schools

The quality of education, as perceived by U.S. adults, has declined during the last year. The 1977 ratings show a significant drop since 1974, when the present rating method was first employed.

The five-point scale used to measure the public's perceptions of the quality of public school education in their own communities is one that is widely used by the schools themselves. It reads as follows:

> **Students are often given the grades A,B,C,D, and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the *public* schools themselves, in this community, were graded in the same way. What grade would you**

give the public schools here – A,B,C,D, or FAIL?

Here are the national ratings given the public schools by residents for the last four years:

	National Totals			
Ratings Given the Public Schools	**1977 %**	**1976 %**	**1975 %**	**1974 %**
A rating	11	13	13	18
B rating	26	29	30	30
C rating	28	28	28	21
D rating	11	10	9	6
FAIL	5	6	7	5
Don't know/ no answer	19	14	13	20

It may bring some comfort to public school educators to know that the ratings given by parents who have children now enrolled in public schools have shown no decline since last year. In fact, if the top two ratings – A and B – are combined, the rating is 54%, which compares with a score of 50% in 1976.

The lowest ratings come from persons who have no children attending school and from those parents whose children are enrolled in parochial and private schools. These two groups are responsible for the decline in the national scores.

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
A rating	11	9	18	6
B rating	26	22	36	29
C rating	28	28	26	31
D rating	11	11	9	16
FAIL	5	5	4	10
Don't know/ no answer	19	25	7	8

The number of U.S. families with children of school age has declined. Consequently, the drop in the national ratings of the schools can be explained in part by this fact.

Analysis of the findings by socioeconomic groups reveals that the following groups give the lowest ratings to their local schools:

1. young adults (18 to 29 age group);

2. residents of cities over one million;
3. persons living in the Western states;
4. blacks, particularly those living in the Northern states.

	A %	B %	C %	D %	FAIL %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
NATIONAL TOTALS	11	26	28	11	5	19
Sex						
Men	11	25	30	11	5	18
Women	11	28	26	12	4	19
Race						
White	12	27	28	11	5	17
Nonwhite	8	23	25	14	5	25
Age						
18 to 29 years	5	25	38	16	4	12
30 to 49 years	15	28	28	10	6	13
50 years and over	13	26	20	9	4	28
Community size						
1 million and over	10	20	28	13	10	19
500,000 – 999,999	11	26	30	11	4	18
50,000 – 499,999	12	27	25	11	4	21
2,500 – 49,999	11	32	26	9	4	18
Under 2,500	12	27	31	11	3	16
Education						
Grade school	17	17	20	5	8	33
High school	10	27	31	12	4	16
College	10	30	26	14	5	15
Region						
East	15	25	31	8	5	16
Midwest	10	29	28	11	3	19
South	13	28	25	10	3	21
West	6	21	28	17	9	19

What's Particularly Good About the Local Schools?

To provide an opportunity for the respondents in the present survey to tell what they thought was particularly good about the local schools, the following question, asked in some of the earlier surveys in this series, was repeated:

> **In your own opinion, in what ways are your local *public* schools particularly good?**

The two responses offered most frequently were "the curriculum" and "the teachers." These have been the two most frequently mentioned in earlier surveys. Here are the top 10 responses, in order of mention:

1. The curriculum
2. The teachers
3. Extracurricular activities
4. School facilities
5. Equal opportunity for all students
6. Good administration
7. Parental interest/participation
8. Good student/teacher relationships
9. Good discipline
10. Small school or small classes

The Back-to-Basics Movement

The decline in national test scores and frequent media reports of illiteracy among high school graduates have given impetus to what is now widely referred to as the back-to-basics movement.

To discover how widely known this movement is and to obtain evidence of its popularity, three questions were included in the survey. The first asked simply:

> **Have you heard or read about the back-to-basics movement in education?**

Understandably, the better educated and those with children now attending school are more familiar with the movement.

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes, have heard of the term	41	38	47	62
No, have not	57	60	52	36
Don't know/no answer	2	2	1	2

Many laymen interested in education, as well as educators, think of other subjects as "basic" besides the traditional three Rs. But does the general public?

This question was asked, therefore, of those who said that they were aware of this movement:

When this term is used, do you think of anything besides reading, writing, and arithmetic?

The responses to this question, on the whole, indicate that the public regards the basics largely in terms of the traditional three subject areas.

Other subjects are mentioned – history, geography, spelling, citizenship, science, music, art, physical education – but not frequently.

However, many respondents think of the term, not in relation to subjects or courses, but in relation to the educational process itself. Thus, "back to basics" is interpreted as meaning a return to schooling of earlier years. To many respondents it means "respect for teachers," "good manners," "politeness," "obedience," "respect for elders," "structured classrooms," "back to the old ways of teaching."

A third question asked of those familiar with the term was this:

Do you favor or oppose this back-to-basics movement?

All groups in the population express overwhelming approval of the movement.

Results Based on Those Aware of Term

	Favor %	Oppose %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
NATIONAL TOTALS	83	11	6
Sex			
Men	83	10	7
Women	83	11	6

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Race			
White	84	10	6
Nonwhite	75	20	5
Age			
18 to 29 years	79	14	7
30 to 49 years	82	12	6
50 years and over	87	7	6
Community size			
1 million and over	78	12	10
500,000 – 999,999	77	13	10
50,000 – 499,999	85	12	3
2,500 – 49,999	88	5	7
Under 2,500	85	9	6
Education			
Grade school	93	6	1
High school	84	9	7
College	81	13	6
Region			
East	77	15	8
Midwest	89	6	5
South	85	11	4
West	81	11	8

Early Graduation from High School

Although the traditional in education always exerts a strong influence in shaping the public's views, wide support is shown for a proposal to permit some high school students to graduate early.

This question was asked:

> **If high school students can meet academic requirements in three years instead of four, should they, or should they not, be permitted to graduate early?**

Nationally, 74% of those sampled said that students should be permitted to graduate early; 22% said they should not. All groups in the population widely favor this proposal – especially those under 30 years of age.

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Should be permitted to graduate early	74	77	68	67
Should not	22	18	31	27
Don't know/ no answer	4	5	1	6

The results by major groups:

	Yes, They Should %	No, They Should Not %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
NATIONAL TOTALS	74	22	4
Sex			
Men	73	22	5
Women	74	22	4
Race			
White	73	23	4
Nonwhite	81	13	6
Age			
18 to 29 years	82	16	2
30 to 49 years	68	29	3
50 years and over	73	20	7
Community size			
1 million and over	76	18	6
500,000 – 999,999	78	18	4
50,000 – 499,999	73	22	5
2,500 – 49,999	75	21	4
Under 2,500	69	29	2
Education			
Grade school	75	14	11
High school	72	25	3
College	76	21	3
Region			
East	74	23	3
Midwest	74	21	5
South	73	22	5
West	75	21	4

College Courses in Fourth Year of High School

A related proposal also wins favorable support among respondents.

The following question was asked:

Should high school courses be arranged to make it possible for some students to finish one year of college work while they are still in high school, so that these students can graduate from college in three years instead of four?

The findings show that 63% of the total sample say that courses should be arranged to allow college work, 31% say no. Young people in particular favor this proposal. The greatest opposition is found in the small communities – those which would have the greatest difficulty in providing staff or facilities to add college courses for high school seniors.

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes, courses should be arranged to allow college work	63	62	66	63
No, they should not	31	30	31	36
Don't know/ no answer	6	8	3	1

By socioeconomic groups:

	Yes, Courses Should Be Arranged to Allow College Work %	No, They Should Not %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
NATIONAL TOTALS	63	31	6
Sex			
Men	60	34	6
Women	65	29	6
Race			
White	62	33	5
Nonwhite	68	19	13
Age			
18 to 29 years	68	29	3
30 to 49 years	61	35	4
50 years and over	61	29	10
Community size			
1 million and over	69	24	7
500,000 – 999,999	65	27	8

50,000 – 499,999	67	28	5
2,500 – 49,999	55	37	8
Under 2,500	59	37	4
Education			
Grade school	68	16	16
High school	60	35	5
College	65	31	4
Region			
East	66	29	5
Midwest	59	34	7
South	63	29	8
West	66	30	4

Absenteeism

Few school systems have found adequate ways to cope with the thorny problem of absenteeism. In one city (New York), only 71% of enrolled high school students are in school on a given day.

To see what suggestions parents of schoolchildren and others might have, this "open" question was asked:

In your opinion, what can be done by the schools to reduce student absenteeism (truancy)?

The suggestions offered tend to fall in about equal numbers into three broad categories.

Category 1 – Persons who, in general, believe that the schools and the teachers are chiefly to blame for absenteeism.

These typical direct quotations indicate how persons in this category would deal with the problem: "The courses should be made more interesting. Few teachers ever bother to make what they are teaching exciting or important to the students." "Teachers should spend more time with students, be more dedicated, and avoid being clock watchers." "Courses should be more practical, more 'today'-related." "Get the students who stay away from school most often to sit down and talk over their school problems and make their own suggestions about solving the problem." "Incentives should be devised. . . . Have each class compete with other classes. The one with the highest attendance gets a half-day off."

Category 2 – Persons who, in general, start with the conviction that parents are chiefly to blame for absenteeism.

Some of their suggestions follow: "Parents, whether they are at home or work, should be immediately notified if their child fails to show up at school." "Parents in many cases do not realize how important attendance is. They should be brought together and told exactly why attendance is so important." "When a child stays away from school the parents should be made to confer with the teachers, with the child present, to find out why." "The schools and the local authorities should get after the parents. Put them on the block and make them see that they are responsible."

Category 3 – Persons who, in general, regard truancy as a matter for the police and local authorities.

Some typical suggestions: "More truant officers should be hired and local laws should be strictly enforced." "The police should be ordered to stop any child of school age who is on the streets during school hours. If the child doesn't have a written excuse, he or she should be taken into custody."

Other suggestions: "Children who are frequently absent should have to obey earlier curfew laws." "They should have to make up their schoolwork on Saturdays or during summer vacation." "They should be put to work cleaning up the parks and playgrounds."

Punishing Parents For Student Absenteeism

Since many people hold the view that parents are responsible for their children's absenteeism from school, the proposal has been made that parents be brought into court and fined if their children continually fail to attend.

To learn how much support this proposal might have throughout the nation, the following question was included in the survey:

In your opinion, should, or should not, parents be

brought into court and given a small fine when a child of theirs is frequently absent without excuse (truant) from school?

A slight majority of all respondents vote for such a penalty. Parents of children who are now attending school, and who would be affected by such a ruling, are more evenly divided, but still more favor the proposal than oppose it.

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes, should fine	51	52	48	46
No, should not	40	39	44	48
Don't know/ no answer	9	9	8	6

Analysis of the vote by groups brings to light these facts: Older citizens favor the proposal; young adults oppose. The only region of the nation where a majority opposes the plan is the West. Both blacks and whites favor the proposal, as do those in the lowest educational level.

By socioeconomic groups:

	Yes, Should Fine %	No, Should Not %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
NATIONAL TOTALS	51	40	9
Sex			
Men	52	40	8
Women	50	41	9
Race			
White	52	40	8
Nonwhite	46	40	14
Age			
18 to 29 years	39	56	5
30 to 49 years	51	40	9
50 years and over	60	29	11

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Community size			
1 million and over	56	33	11
500,000 – 999,999	39	50	11
50,000 – 499,999	50	45	5
2,500 – 49,999	51	42	7
Under 2,500	53	37	10
Education			
Grade school	65	25	10
High school	48	43	9
College	48	44	8
Region			
East	55	38	7
Midwest	48	41	11
South	53	37	10
West	44	50	6

Rearranging School Hours For Working Fathers and Mothers

With an increasing number of mothers having jobs outside the home, the question arises as to whether school hours should be changed so that children will not be left unsupervised in the afternoons while they await the return of their parents.

The question:

> **Most people who have jobs today do not get home from work until 5:00 p.m. or later. In your opinion, should the schools arrange the afternoon school schedule so that children would get home at about the same time as their parents, or not?**

Taking all respondents into account, this proposal fails to win majority approval. Nationally, the vote is nearly 2-1 opposed. The proposal wins a higher favorable response among those persons who do not have children in school than it does from those who do. Persons in the lowest education group also favor the plan.

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes, should change schedule	33	38	22	17
No, should not	59	52	73	76
Don't know/ no answer	8	10	5	7

By socioeconomic groups:

	Yes, Should Change Schedule %	No, Should Not %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
NATIONAL TOTALS	33	59	8
Sex			
Men	32	58	10
Women	33	61	6
Race			
White	32	60	8
Nonwhite	38	54	8
Age			
18 to 29 years	29	65	6
30 to 49 years	24	69	7
50 years and over	43	46	11
Community size			
1 million and over	32	59	9
500,000 – 999,999	30	64	6
50,000 – 499,999	37	55	8
2,500 – 49,999	31	59	10
Under 2,500	31	62	7
Education			
Grade school	50	38	12
High school	30	64	6
College	29	62	9
Region			
East	33	58	9
Midwest	30	62	8
South	34	58	8
West	35	60	5

Advantages of Schools in Small Communities

Two to three decades ago it was widely believed that big-city schools, with their large enrollments, were better suited to provide quality education than the schools in small communities. In fact, it was this belief that to a great extent powered the movement for regionalization and for consolidating schools into still larger units.

Today bigness in almost every field is out of vogue. Decentralization is popular in government, business, and (judging from results of this survey) in education as well. The vast majority of persons throughout the nation believe that students get a better education in schools located in small communities than they do in the big cities.

Size alone, obviously, cannot account fully for the disfavor in which many big-city schools are held. The racial mix has changed greatly in the last two decades, with the migration of upper- and middle-class white families to the suburbs.

Apart from the question of quality of education, the fact that most people today believe that education in the small communities is better will almost certainly induce more families with children of school age to leave the city for the suburbs or other small communities.

In general, do you think that students today get a better education in schools that are located in small communities or in schools located in big cities?

	Small Communities %	Big Cities %	Makes No Difference %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
NATIONAL TOTALS	**68**	**11**	**12**	**9**
Sex				
Men	67	12	12	9
Women	68	10	13	9
Race				
White	68	11	13	8
Nonwhite	61	12	10	17
Age				
18 to 29 years	70	15	10	5
30 to 49 years	67	11	12	10
50 years and over	67	7	15	11

Community size				
1 million and over	71	10	12	7
500,000 – 999,999	52	16	19	13
50,000 – 499,999	67	12	12	9
2,500 – 49,999	70	10	11	9
Under 2,500	73	8	11	8
Education				
Grade school	61	8	17	14
High school	71	10	12	7
College	66	13	12	9
Region				
East	73	7	13	7
Midwest	69	10	12	9
South	61	16	12	11
West	68	9	14	9

Meeting Energy Shortages

The very cold winter of 1976-77 closed many schools for varying periods of time. With the prospect of energy shortages in the future, the question arises as to whether schools should close during the coldest weeks of winter.

To get the public's reaction, and especially the reaction of those parents with children now of school age, this question was asked:

> **In order to save energy (fuel oil, gas), it has been suggested that the schools be closed in the middle of the winter. Children would make up lost school time by starting the school year in late August and ending the school year around the first of July. Would you favor or oppose adopting this plan here?**

The results, nationally, show that the public is opposed to this proposal by the ratio of 56% to 36%, with 8% having no opinion. Parents of children now attending public schools are even more generally opposed. They vote against the plan 64% to 32%.

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Favor closing	36	38	32	26

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Oppose closing	56	51	64	67
Don't know/ no answer	8	11	4	7

Although no group or section of the nation votes in favor of the plan, many observers of the public scene, knowing the reluctance of the public to accept changes in the educational system, may be surprised at the size of the minority who favor the proposal.

	Favor %	Oppose %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
NATIONAL TOTALS	36	56	8
Sex			
Men	37	56	7
Women	35	55	10
Race			
White	36	57	7
Nonwhite	34	50	16
Age			
18 to 29 years	39	55	6
30 to 49 years	33	60	7
50 years and over	37	51	12
Community size			
1 million and over	35	54	11
500,000 – 999,999	36	56	8
50,000 – 499,999	36	56	8
2,500 – 49,999	41	46	13
Under 2,500	33	62	5
Education			
Grade school	37	50	13
High school	34	58	8
College	39	55	6
Region			
East	37	55	8
Midwest	37	55	8
South	39	53	8
West	29	61	10

Media Coverage of Education

Many educators complain that the news media give too much play of a negative character to happenings in the public schools. At the same time, they say the media pay too little attention to what the schools are achieving or trying to achieve.

To determine how the public stands on this issue, the following question was asked:

> **Do you think the news media (newspapers, TV, and radio) give a fair and accurate picture of the public schools in this community, or not?**

While many persons agree with the educators who hold this view, a greater number disagree.

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes, give fair and accurate picture	42	39	48	41
No, do not	36	34	39	42
Don't know/ no answer	22	27	13	17

Significantly, more parents of children now attending the public schools say that the media are fair and accurate than hold the opposite view. Only in the Western states do more respondents say that the media are unfair.

Nationally, the results show that 42% say the media are fair and accurate; 36% say they are not; and 22% have no opinion on this issue.

The results by major groups in the population follow:

	Yes, Give Fair and Accurate Picture %	No, Do Not %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
NATIONAL TOTALS	42	36	22
Sex			
Men	43	35	22
Women	41	37	22
Race			
White	42	36	22
Nonwhite	40	35	25

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Age			
18 to 29 years	45	37	18
30 to 49 years	46	37	17
50 years and over	37	32	31
Community size			
1 million and over	36	36	28
500,000 – 999,999	46	32	22
Community size	%	%	%
50,000 – 499,999	44	38	18
2,500 – 49,999	42	34	24
Under 2,500	43	36	21
Education			
Grade school	32	27	41
High school	42	40	18
College	47	33	20
Region			
East	45	33	22
Midwest	45	35	20
South	40	35	25
West	36	42	22

Improving Media Coverage

To find out what the news media could do to better report on local education, all respondents included in the survey were asked:

> **In your opinion, how could the media (newspapers, TV, and radio) improve their reporting of education in the local schools?**

The answers elicited by this question often referred to the paucity of news about the schools reported in many communities. But the most frequent response dwelt on the need for more positive news – interesting things the schools are doing to achieve their educational goals.

Many specific suggestions were offered which the media might well consider. Among these were:

"Reporters should be sent into the schoolrooms to see what goes on there. They should put themselves in the teacher's place, and in the student's place."

"It would be interesting to find out about all the different courses that are offered."

"Reporters should talk to students, explore their problems."

"Why don't they [the media] tell us about the standing of the local schools – how well they do in comparison with the private schools, and with other schools in nearby cities."

"I should like to know more about the changes that are being introduced and why. There should be more background information about education and about new programs."

"Outstanding students should be written up and praised the way top athletes are."

"An interesting series could be built around the idea of a typical day at school with a typical seventh-grader, ninth-grader, etc. I can remember what went on in my day. I wonder if it is the same now."

"I hear a lot about the gadgets now used in the schools and in the classrooms to teach different subjects such as foreign language and I would like to know more about them."

"The media report on the school budget, but they never tell, in detail, just where the tax dollars are spent."

"In the magazines I read about 'open' classrooms, 'team teaching,' and such things, and I wonder if our local schools go in for these new ideas."

Decision-Making Authority Of Advisory Committees

One of the most useful and popular means of increasing citizen participation in school and civic affairs and of taking advantage of the training and expertise of these citizens is to create citizen advisory groups.

The question arises as to how much authority these citizen advisory groups should have. Should final decision-making authority be left with the advisory groups, or should it remain with the school board?

Three questions, probing views in respect to advisory group authority concerning curriculum, staff selection, and the budget, were included in the survey instrument to obtain the views of the public.

The results show that people want the final decision-making authority to remain where it is: with the school board.

Although there is slightly more sentiment for giving advisory groups authority over the budget than over the curriculum or staff selection, the overwhelming majority believe that the school board should retain its present authority.

These findings should not be taken to mean that school boards should not listen to advisory groups on all three matters. However, if the public believes that school boards are making wrong decisions, it has the right to elect new board members.

The first question asked:

Many school systems have committees made up of citizens who serve in an advisory capacity. Do you think these advisory groups should have the final decision-making authority over the *curriculum*, or should the final authority remain with the school board?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Authority with citizen groups	17	18	15	23
Authority with school board	71	68	78	71
Don't know/ no answer	12	14	7	6

The second question:

How about decisions regarding *staff selection* – should the final authority be given to these citizen committees or should the final authority remain with the school board?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Authority with citizen groups	15	15	13	18
Authority with school board	75	73	80	76
Don't know/ no answer	10	12	7	6

The third question:

And decisions about the *budget* – should the final authority be given to these citizen committees or should the final authority remain with the school board?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Authority with citizen groups	19	20	19	32
Authority with school board	70	68	72	65
Don't know/ no answer	11	12	9	3

Courses for Parents on How To Deal With Their Children's Problems

Throughout the nation there is wide acceptance of the view that parents must work closely with the schools if students are to reach their full educational potential.

Problems of discipline, motivation, poor work and study habits, drug and alcohol addiction, and many others normally have their origin in the home. Unless something is done to correct the home situation, the best efforts of teachers will fail.

It is probably no exaggeration to say that the next great advance in education will come when parents and teachers work as a team, with parents taking full responsibility for problems that arise in the home.

The 1976 survey revealed that more than three in every four U.S. adults approve of the idea of offering courses to parents as a regular part of the public school educational system. And parents of schoolchildren in the public schools voted nearly 4-1 for this plan. As further evidence of their approval, they said they were willing to pay additional taxes to support such a program.

In fact, in every survey in which this proposal to help parents, through a course of instruction, to help their children in school has been asked, sizable majorities have voted in favor of such courses.

In the present survey an effort was made to discover the specific subjects that might be included in such a course for parents. Presumably, if the plan were to be carried out by a school, then the parents of children in a given grade would meet together to discuss the problems of children of that age.

From a total of 16 suggested topics, parents of children now attending school were asked to choose those that interested them most.

The question was worded in this manner:

> **The subjects listed on this card are some that could be covered in a special course for parents offered by the local schools. Which of these subjects would interest you the MOST?**
>
> (A card was then given to each respondent, with 16 suggested topics.)

Listed below in order of mention are the 16 suggested topics for parents whose eldest child is 13 to 20 years of age.

1. What to do about drugs, smoking, use of alcohol
2. How to help the child choose a career
3. How to help the child set high achievement goals
4. How to develop good work habits
5. How to encourage reading
6. How to increase interest in school and school subjects
7. How to help the child organize his/her homework
8. How to improve parent/child relationships
9. How to improve the child's thinking and observa-

tion abilities

10. How to deal with the child's emotional problems
11. How to use family activities to help the child do better in school
12. How to improve the child's school behavior
13. How to reduce television viewing
14. How to help the child get along with other children
15. How to improve health habits
16. How to deal with dating problems

Ranked below in order of mention are the 16 suggested topics for parents whose eldest child is 12 years or younger.

1. What to do about drugs, smoking, use of alcohol
2. How to help the child set high achievement goals
3. How to develop good work habits
4. How to improve the child's school behavior
5. How to improve the child's thinking and observation abilities
6. How to deal with the child's emotional problems
7. How to increase interest in school and school subjects
8. How to help the child organize his/her homework
9. How to improve parent/child relationships
10. How to help the child choose a career
11. How to use family activities to help the child do better in school
12. How to encourage reading
13. How to help the child get along with other children
14. How to reduce television viewing
15. How to deal with dating problems
16. How to improve health habits

Experience in carrying out such a program of instruction would undoubtedly uncover other areas to include in future courses.

Significantly, the topics selected as most interesting by parents who have attended college are not markedly different from the topics regarded as most interesting by those who have had little schooling. This would indicate that home problems are very much the same in the best-educated, highest-income families and those farther down on the socioeconomic scale.

In short, virtually all parents freely admit that they need help, and they would like to have the local schools offer this help and guidance by regular courses and by discussion.

Government-Mandated Programs

Public school and college administrators are becoming more and more vexed by rules and regulations promulgated by Washington that require certain actions to be taken without regard to the additional time and cost entailed.

Making provision for physically and mentally handicapped students is one of these. Local schools are required to bear the added costs of special programs without help, in most instances, from the federal government.

To measure the public's views on this issue, the following question was included in the survey:

> **Services for the physically and mentally handicapped student cost more than regular school services. When the local schools are required to provide these special services by the federal government, should the federal government pay the extra cost, or not?**

The overwhelming majority of those interviewed say the federal government should pay the extra cost of such programs. In fact, every important group in the population and every region of the nation supports the idea that the federal government should pay the extra costs.

	Yes, Government Should Pay Extra Cost %	No, Should Not %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
NATIONAL TOTALS	82	11	7
Sex			
Men	80	13	7
Women	83	9	8
Race			
White	82	11	7

Nonwhite	81	10	9
Age			
18 to 29 years	83	11	6
30 to 49 years	81	11	8
50 years and over	81	11	8
Community size			
1 million and over	83	11	6
500,000 – 999,999	77	16	7
50,000 – 499,999	81	13	6
2,500 – 49,999	78	10	12
Under 2,500	86	8	6
Education			
Grade school	81	8	11
High school	83	10	7
College	79	15	6
Region			
East	85	11	4
Midwest	80	13	7
South	81	9	10
West	79	14	7

Local Control of Federal Programs

Another source of concern is the federal government's insistence that local school authorities follow strict regulations when funds are awarded. Oftentimes, local authorities have different ideas about how best to spend these funds.

Respondents again reveal their anti-Washington, anti-red tape attitudes in their answers to the following question:

> **When federal agencies appropriate money for educational programs, they usually require the schools that receive this money to spend it as these agencies direct. Should, or should not, this be changed to permit local school authorities to decide how the money is to be spent?**

The nation's adults vote 2-1 for giving local school authorities jurisdiction over how the money is to be spent to carry out the program locally. Every major group in the population is in agreement on this issue, as the findings show.

By socioeconomic groups:

	Yes, Change To Allow Local People To Decide %	No, Should Not Change %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
NATIONAL TOTALS	**62**	**29**	**9**
Sex			
Men	64	28	8
Women	60	30	10
Race			
White	63	28	9
Nonwhite	53	32	15
Age			
18 to 29 years	61	33	6
30 to 49 years	64	28	8
50 years and over	61	26	13
Community size			
1 million and over	63	27	10
500,000 – 999,999	56	34	11
50,000 – 499,999	66	27	7
2,500 – 49,999	59	29	12
Under 2,500	62	29	9
Education			
Grade school	53	29	18
High school	62	30	8
College	65	27	8
Region			
East	60	31	9
Midwest	62	28	10
South	62	29	9
West	64	26	10

Take Education Out of HEW?

Frequent complaints are made that the present Department of Health, Education, and Welfare is so huge that education is not given the attention that it merits. Some believe that funding of education by the federal government would be increased if it did not have to compete with health and welfare in the same department. Still others believe that public education is so important that it deserves cabinet status in its own right.

For these reasons, the issue was taken to a representative sample of the people of the nation to get their views. The question asked was this:

> **In your opinion, should *Education* be taken out of the present Department of Health, Education, and Welfare and made a separate department of the federal government, or not?**

Sentiment on this issue is fairly evenly divided, with slightly more respondents voting to keep it in the present department rather than make it a separate department.

The results:

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Favor making education a separate department	40	40	40	42
Oppose	45	42	49	47
Don't know/ no answer	15	18	11	11

A plurality of voters in cities of one million and over in population, as well as those living in the East and those who are college-educated, favor making education a separate department in the federal government.

	Yes, Should Be Separate Department %	No, Should Not %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
NATIONAL TOTALS	40	45	15
Sex			
Men	41	45	14
Women	40	44	16
Race			
White	42	43	15
Nonwhite	30	51	19
Age			
18 to 29 years	44	46	10
30 to 49 years	39	48	13
50 years and over	39	40	21

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Community size			
1 million and over	46	37	17
500,000 – 999,999	37	48	15
50,000 – 499,999	39	47	14
2,500 – 49,999	37	50	13
Under 2,500	41	42	17
Education			
Grade school	31	43	26
High school	39	47	14
College	48	41	11
Region			
East	43	41	16
Midwest	36	48	16
South	42	45	13
West	41	43	16

Tenure

A recurring issue of recent years has to do with tenure for teachers. During the nine years that these studies dealing with the public's attitudes toward the public schools have been conducted, views on tenure have been probed on three occasions by questions that contained an explanation of the issue.

The point often arises, however, as to how many persons in the general public are familiar with the term "tenure" and how persons who are better informed in this respect view the problem.

In this connection, a question was first asked of all persons included in the survey:

> **Do you happen to know what the word "tenure" means as it applies to teachers' jobs?**

A second question asked of those who replied "yes":

> **Just as you understand it, what does tenure mean?**

A third question, limited to those who gave a correct answer, asked:

> **Do you favor or oppose tenure for teachers?**

A total of 28% of the adults interviewed nationally could give a correct definition of tenure as it applies to teachers' jobs.

When persons who know what the term means are asked whether they favor or oppose tenure, a majority say they oppose tenure. The same conclusion was reached in the three earlier surveys in which tenure questions were asked.

Persons who have no children in the schools are more likely to favor tenure than those who have children in school. Among the former, 44% favor tenure and 45% oppose it; in the case of parents with children in the public schools, 54% oppose and 37% favor it. In the case of parents with children in parochial or private schools, 84% oppose and 16% favor tenure.

(Based on those who know what the term means)	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Favor tenure	40	44	37	16
Oppose	50	45	54	84
Don't know/ no answer	10	11	9	–

Parent/Teacher Conferences

At least in theory, parents should follow the educational progress of their children by holding frequent conferences with their children's teachers. But do they? Obviously, the situation changes from school to school and state to state.

To shed light on the frequency of parent/teacher conferences, this question was asked of those parents who now have children attending school:

> **Thinking about your eldest child, have you at any time since the beginning of the school year discussed your child's progress, or problems, with any of your child's teachers?**

Fieldwork for the present survey was conducted during the period April 28 through May 2, 1977. The figures must, therefore, be interpreted accordingly.

The findings show that 79% of all parents whose children are 12 years of age and under had talked to one or more of their child's teachers about his/her progress since the beginning of the school year. But only 55% of parents whose children are 13 years old and over had talked to any teacher.

A second question, asked of those who had talked to one of their child's teachers, sought to discover how many conferences had been held:

About how often [have you talked to your child's teachers] since the beginning of the school year?

In the case of parents whose eldest child is 12 years of age or younger, the median number of conferences is two.

The same figure – two – is the median for parent/teacher conferences for parents whose eldest child is 13 years of age or older.

From these findings, it appears that during an average period of eight school months, three out of five parents will talk to teachers about the progress of their child. And, on the average, these parents, during a period of eight months, will hold two such meetings.

Parents' Estimates of Time Children Spend On Television, Homework, Reading

Parents who now have children enrolled in the public or parochial and private schools were asked to give an estimate of the time spent, on a typical school day, by their eldest child on television, homework, and reading.

Since time spent is likely to vary with age, the results are reported for those whose eldest child is 12 years of age and younger, and those 13 years of age and older.

The first question:

(For eldest child) **About how much time does he/she spend looking at television after school hours and until he/she goes to bed, on a typical school day?**

(Based on those responding)	By Children 12 Years of Age And Younger %	By Children 13 Years of Age And Older %
No time	2	5
Up to 1 hour	20	26
Over 1 hour to 2 hours	38	33
Over 2 hours to 3 hours	28	17
Over 3 hours to 4 hours	10	11
Over 4 hours	2	8

The second question:

And about how much time on school homework on a typical school day?

(Based on those responding)	By Children 12 Years of Age And Younger %	By Children 13 Years of Age And Older %
No time	24	15
Up to 15 minutes	3	3
16 to 30 minutes	22	10
Over 30 minutes to 1 hour	29	30
Over 1 hour to 2 hours	17	32
Over 2 hours	5	10

The third question:

And about how much time on reading – not connected with schoolwork – on a typical school day?

(Based on those responding)	By Children 12 Years of Age And Younger %	By Children 13 Years of Age And Older %
No time	12	28
Up to 30 minutes	43	24
Over 30 minutes to 1 hour	33	28
Over 1 hour	12	20

What this adds up to – for children 12 years and younger – is that the typical child spends approximately:

– 2 hours viewing television on a typical school day,
– 30 minutes reading (not schoolwork), and
– 45 minutes doing homework.

Among children 13 years of age and older, the typical child spends approximately:

- 2 hours viewing television,
- 30 minutes reading (not schoolwork), and
- 1 hour doing homework.

Parental Help with Homework

To find out whether parents help their children with homework, the following question was asked of parents with school-age children about their eldest child:

Do you regularly help your child with his/her homework?

Parents who have children in the public schools and parents of children in the parochial/private schools give almost exactly the same amount of help to their children.

	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes, regularly	24	17
Yes, when he/she needs help	27	32
No	44	41
Don't know/no answer	5	10

When the age of the eldest child is considered, parents respond in this way:

	Children 12 Years of Age And Under %	Children 13 Years of Age And Older %
Yes, regularly	37	16
Yes, when he/she needs help	34	26
No	27	58
Don't know/no answer	2	*

*Less than 1%

Time Limits on Television Viewing

Because the attraction of television is so great for children in most families, many educators have come to the conclusion that definite limits should be placed on the amount of time that parents permit their children to view television during the school week.

To discover how many parents already impose such rules, this question was asked (about the eldest child):

Do you place a definite limit on the amount of time your child spends viewing television during the school week?

The results:

	National Totals %	Parents Whose Eldest Child Is 12 Years And Under %	Parents Whose Eldest Child Is 13 Years And Over %
Yes, have definite time limit	35	49	28
No	60	50	70
Don't know/no answer	5	1	2

Safety of Children

One of the interesting facts turned up in the present survey is the relatively high percentage of parents (one in four) who fear for the physical safety of their children in school – and 28% fear for the safety of their children in their own neighborhoods. Fewer parents of children who attend parochial school worry about their children's physical safety in school, but still the figure is high – one in five.

The first question asked (about the eldest child):

When he/she is at school, do you fear for his/her physical safety?

	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes, fear for safety	25	19
No	69	73
Don't know/no answer	6	8

The second question asked:

When your child is outside at play in your own neighborhood, do you fear for his/her safety?

	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes, fear for safety	28	30
No	68	61
Don't know/no answer	4	9

FURTHER BREAKDOWNS

The Major Problems

What do you think are the biggest problems with which the PUBLIC schools in this community must deal?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Lack of discipline	26	26	27	29
Integration/segregation/busing	13	13	11	18
Lack of proper financial support	12	11	14	14
Difficulty of getting "good" teachers	11	10	12	19
Poor curriculum	10	9	12	14
Use of drugs	7	8	6	3
Parents' lack of interest	5	5	6	7
Size of school/classes	5	4	7	11
Teachers' lack of interest	5	4	6	5
Mismanagement of funds/programs	4	4	3	5
Pupils' lack of interest	3	3	4	2
Problems with administration	3	3	3	5
Crime/vandalism	2	3	1	1
Lack of proper facilities	2	2	3	–

Transportation	2	2	1	1
Parents' involvement in school activities	1	1	1	–
Communication problems	1	1	1	–
Too many schools/ declining enrollment	1	1	1	1
School board policies	1	*	2	–
Drinking/alcoholism	1	1	*	–
There are no problems	4	2	7	3
Miscellaneous	5	4	6	7
Don't know/no answer	16	21	9	3

*Less than 1%
(Figures add to more than 100% because of multiple answers.)

Ways in Which Local Schools Are Good

In your own opinion, in what ways are your local PUBLIC schools particularly good?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
The curriculum	23	17	35	28
The teachers	20	18	26	13
Extracurricular activities	10	8	15	9
School facilities	7	6	9	6
Equal opportunity for all students	4	3	5	8
Good administration	3	2	5	3
Parental interest/ participation	3	2	4	1
Good student/teacher relationships	3	1	6	1
Good discipline	2	2	2	1
Small school or small classes	2	2	3	3
Up-to-date teaching methods	2	2	3	2
No racial conflicts	2	1	2	3
Good lunch program	1	1	2	3
Transportation system	1	1	1	1

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Kids are kept off the street	1	1	*	–
Close to home	1	1	1	–
Nothing is good	9	9	7	10
Miscellaneous	1	1	1	–
Don't know/no answer	31	39	14	29

*Less than 1%
(Totals add to more than 100% because of multiple answers.)

Small Communities vs. Big Cities

In general, do you think that students today get a better education in schools that are located in small communities or in schools located in big cities?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Small communities	68	66	72	59
Big cities	11	11	10	16
Makes no difference	12	13	11	20
Don't know/ no answer	9	10	7	5

Government-Mandated Programs

Services for the physically and mentally handicapped student cost more than regular school services. When the local schools are required to provide these special services by the federal government, should the federal government pay the extra cost, or not?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes, government should pay extra cost	82	80	85	84

No, should not	11	12	9	14
Don't know/ no answer	7	8	6	2

Local Control of Federal Programs

When federal agencies appropriate money for educational programs, they usually require the schools that receive this money to spend it as these agencies direct. Should, or should not, this be changed to permit local school authorities to decide how the money is to be spent?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes, change to allow local people to decide	62	60	65	67
No, should not change	29	29	29	27
Don't know/ no answer	9	11	6	6

COMPOSITION OF THE SAMPLE

No children in schools	66%
Public school parents	30%*
Parochial school parents	6%*

*Totals exceed 34% because some parents have children attending more than one kind of school.

Sex	%
Men	47
Women	53
	100

Occupation	
Business & professional	27
Clerical & sales	8
Farm	2
Skilled labor	19
Unskilled labor	21
Nonlabor force	20
Undesignated	3
	100

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Race	
White	88
Nonwhite	12
	100

Religion	
Protestant	60
Roman Catholic	29
Jewish	3
Others	8
	100

Age	
18 to 24 years	18
25 to 29 years	10
30 to 49 years	35
50 years & over	37
	100

Region	
East	28
Midwest	27
South	28
West	17
	100

Community Size	
1 million & over	20
500,000 to 999,999	12
50,000 to 499,999	26
2,500 to 49,999	16
Under 2,500	26
	100

Income	
$20,000 & over	22
$15,000 to $19,999	18
$10,000 to $14,999	23
$7,000 to $9,999	10
$5,000 to $6,999	9
$3,000 to $4,999	10
Under $3,000	7
Undesignated	1
	100

Political Affiliation	
Republican	21
Democrat	45
Independent	31
Other	3
	100

Education	
Elementary grades	16
High school incomplete	16
High school complete	34
Technical, trade, or business school	5
College incomplete	17
College graduate	12
Undesignated	*
	100

*Less than 1%

Chapter 11

Tenth Annual Gallup Poll of Public Attitudes Toward Education — 1978

Purpose of the Study

This survey, which measures the attitudes of Americans toward their public schools, is the tenth annual survey of this series, currently funded by /I/D/E/A/, the Institute for Development of Educational Activities, Inc., an affiliate of the Charles F. Kettering Foundation. Each year efforts are made to deal with issues of greatest concern to both educators and the public. New as well as trend questions are included in this and every survey.

To be sure that the survey would embrace the most important issues in the field of education, the Kettering Foundation sent letters to educators across the nation asking for their views. Following this, a selected group of educators and leaders in other fields met with representatives of Gallup and /I/D/E/A/ to evaluate preliminary questions and to suggest other possible issues for inclusion.

The panel members this year were: Gregory R. Anrig, commissioner of education, Commonwealth of Massachusetts; Edward Brainard, chairman, Colorado State Committee, North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, University of Northern Colorado, Greeley; B. Frank Brown, /I/D/E/A/ Information and Services Program, Melbourne, Florida; Gregory Caras, principal, Longfellow I.G.E. Magnet School, Dayton, Ohio; Alonzo A. Crim, superintendent, Atlanta (Georgia) Public Schools; Stanley Elam, director of publications, Phi Delta Kappa, Bloomington, Indiana; Warren G. Hill, executive director, Education Commission of the States, Denver, Colorado; Harold L. Hodgkinson, executive director, Professional Institute, American Management Association, Washington, D.C.; K. Jessie Kobayashi, superintendent, Murray School District, Dublin, California; Sid McDonald, senator and chairman, Education Committee, Alabama State Legislature; Belen Moreno, teacher, Avondale (Arizona) Elementary School; Curtis Peterson, senator and chairman, Education Committee, Florida Senate; Samuel G. Sava, executive director, /I/D/E/A/, Dayton, Ohio; Leonard Price Stavisky, assemblyman and chairman, Education Committee, New York State Assembly.

We wish to thank these individuals for their valuable help.

Research Procedure

The Sample. The sample used in this survey embraced a total of 1,539 adults (18 years of age and older). It is described as a modified probability sample of the nation. Personal, in-home interviewing was conducted in all areas of the nation and in all types of communities. A description of the sample will be found at the end of this report.

Time of Interviewing. The fieldwork for this study was carried out during the period of April 27 through May 1, 1978.

The Interviewing Form. All the questions included in the survey instrument were pretested by the staff of interviewers maintained by the Gallup organizations.

The Report. In the tables that follow, the heading "Parochial School Parents" includes not only parents of students who attend parochial school but also parents of students who attend private or independent schools. This heading is used because parochial school students outnumber private or independent school students.

Findings of this report apply only to the country as a whole and not to individual local communities. Local surveys, using the same questions, can be conducted to determine how local areas compare with the national norm.

Major Problems Confronting the Public Schools in 1978

It will come as no surprise that discipline again tops the list of major problems facing the local public schools of the nation. Only once in the 10 years since these surveys were initiated has discipline failed to receive more mentions than any other problem.

Since parents with children now attending the public schools presumably are in a better position to judge public school problems than other groups, their views should carry extra weight. With this group, discipline is ranked first. Lack of proper financial support is named by the second largest number in this group. Third in their list is the use of dope/drugs; fourth, problems arising out of integration and busing. And fifth in mentions is poor curriculum/poor standards.

Parents with children in nonpublic schools name discipline as the top problem of the public schools. They are far more inclined to mention integration/busing than parents with children in the public schools. Likewise, they cite poor curriculum/poor standards far more often than do parents who have children attending the public schools.

Citizens who have no children in either public or nonpublic schools and who must obtain most of their information about the local public schools from the media or hearsay cite discipline most often, followed by integration/busing, use of drugs, poor curriculum/poor standards, and lack of proper financial support.

After a dip last year in mentions, dope/drugs has again assumed a high place in the public's concerns about the public schools. Crime/vandalism for the first time receives sufficient mentions to place it among the top 10 major problems.

Below, in order of mentions, is the list of top problems as perceived by a sample of all adults of the nation: 1) lack of discipline, 2) use of dope/drugs, 3) lack of proper financial support, 4) integration/segregation/busing, 5) poor curriculum/poor standards, 6) difficulty of getting good teachers, 7) size of school/classes, 8) pupils' lack of interest, 9) crime/vandalism, 10) parents' lack of interest.

The question was:

What do you think are the biggest problems with which the *public* schools in this community

must deal?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Lack of discipline	25	24	25	30
Use of dope/drugs	13	13	13	15
Lack of proper financial support	13	11	18	11
Integration/busing (combined)	13	14	11	22
Poor curriculum/poor standards	12	12	10	18
Difficulty of getting good teachers	9	9	10	9
Large school/too many classes	5	5	5	5
Pupils' lack of interest	4	5	2	5
Crime/vandalism	4	5	3	5
Parents' lack of interest	4	4	5	4
Teachers' lack of interest	3	2	4	3
Mismanagement of funds/programs	3	3	2	2
Lack of proper facilities	2	2	2	1
Problems with administration	2	2	2	3
Communication problems	2	2	2	-
Drinking/alcoholism	2	1	3	-
School board policies	1	1	2	-
Too many schools/declining enrollment	1	1	2	-
Parents' involvement in school activities	1	1	1	1
Transportation	1	*	1	-
There are no problems	4	2	10	-
Miscellaneous	6	5	10	5
Don't know/no answer	12	15	4	7

*Less than 1% (Figures add to more than 100% because of multiple answers.)

1978 Ratings of the Public Schools

A slight drop in the public's rating of the public schools has been registered during the past year. In the 1977 survey a total of 37% gave the public schools a rating of A or B. In the present survey the figure is nearly the same — 36%, with the percentage giving the schools an A rating dropping from 11 to 9. At the other extreme, 16% gave the schools D or Fail in 1977. In the latest survey the figure is 19%.

The ratings are based upon a five-point scale. The question reads as follows:

> **Students are often given the grades A,B,C,D, and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the *public* schools themselves, in this community, were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the public schools here — A,B,C,D, or FAIL?**

Below are the national ratings given the public schools by local residents for the last five years — the period in which this scale has been employed:

	National Totals				
Ratings Given the Public Schools	**1978 %**	**1977 %**	**1976 %**	**1975 %**	**1974 %**
A rating	9	11	13	13	18
B rating	27	26	29	30	30
C rating	30	28	28	28	21
D rating	11	11	10	9	6
FAIL	8	5	6	7	5
Don't know/ no answer	15	19	14	13	20

Analysis of the findings by different groups in the population, by areas, and by city size provides many interesting insights into the way Americans perceive their public schools.

Parents who have children now attending the public schools hold their schools in much higher esteem than do others in the population. The lowest ratings are given by those who have children enrolled in nonpublic schools. The overall decline in ratings can be explained partly by the fact that there is a continuing decline in the number of U.S. families with children of school age.

	National Totals %	**No Children In School %**	**Public School Parents %**	**Parochial School Parents* %**
A	9	7	15	4
B	27	24	36	19
C	30	29	32	30
D	11	11	10	11
FAIL	8	9	5	21
Don't know/no answer	15	20	2	15

*Includes parents of students attending private and independent schools as well as parochial (nonpublic) schools.

Major differences appear in the ratings when the attitudes of those who live in the larger cities (cities over 50,000) are compared with attitudes of those who live in cities with populations under 50,000. Attitudes are far more favorable in the smaller cities and towns than in the larger cities. In fact, residents of the central cities give their schools the lowest ratings in the nation: A and B ratings combined, 21%; D and Fail ratings combined, 30%. This compares with the highest ratings found (in cities 2,500 to 49,999) of 45% for A and B combined and 12% for D and Fail combined.

Of all groups, blacks living in the North give their public schools the lowest rating. This group rates its schools 43% D or Fail and only 27% A or B.

An interesting contrast is found when Northern blacks are compared with Southern blacks. Almost the opposite in ratings is found. Southern blacks give a top rating (A and B combined) of 35% to the public schools and an unfavorable rating (D and Fail combined) of only 14%.

When the four main areas of the nation are compared, it is found that people living in the West — the area embracing the Rocky Mountain and Pacific states — are least satisfied with their schools.

Younger persons — those 18 to 29 — tend to be slightly more critical than those in the next older age group, as well as more critical than the oldest age group (when only those with opinions are taken into account).

Further breakdowns follow:

	A %	B %	C %	D %	FAIL %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
NATIONAL TOTALS	9	27	30	11	8	15
Sex						
Men	9	26	32	12	7	14
Women	10	27	28	10	10	15
Race						
White	10	27	30	10	8	15
Nonwhite	8	21	27	15	14	15
Age						
18-29	6	25	37	13	9	10
30-49	11	31	29	10	9	10
50 & over	10	24	25	10	8	23
Community size						
1 million & over	8	22	22	14	18	16
500,000 — 999,999	5	22	38	15	2	18
50,000 — 499,999	6	25	38	10	9	12
2,500 — 49,999	13	32	30	8	4	13

Under 2,500	13	31	25	9	6	16
Central city	5	16	35	17	13	14
Education						
Grade school	14	18	25	7	9	27
High school	9	27	30	11	10	13
College	7	31	33	12	6	11
Region						
East	8	32	26	10	11	13
Midwest	10	28	29	10	6	17
South	13	26	30	9	7	15
West	5	17	37	17	10	14
Region/race						
Northern white	8	28	30	11	8	15
Southern white	14	26	30	8	8	14
Northern black	6	21	22	21	22	8
Southern black	11	24	28	10	4	23

How the Public Would Improve the Schools

If school authorities were to take time to talk to a representative sample of people in their school districts to obtain their ideas as to what the schools might be doing that they are not now doing, they would likely find that the public's suggestions fall chiefly into seven categories.

The question asked was an "open" question, which permits each respondent to offer any suggestion or suggestions that he or she wishes:

> **What, if anything, do you think the public schools in this community should be doing that they are not doing now?**

The number and type of suggestions obviously would differ from school district to school district. But for the nation as a whole, they range in the order below:

1. *More strict discipline.* This, of course, has been a constant complaint of the public for the last decade, as reported in this survey series.

The public is bothered by the lack of respect shown to, or demanded by, teachers. They read about the chaos in classrooms. They complain that teachers let children do anything they wish, dress any way they want, pay no attention to school rules, stay away from school whenever they feel like it.

2. *Better teachers.* By "better teachers," the public does not necessarily mean teachers who are better trained or more knowledgeable in the subjects they teach.

They are much more inclined to think of "good" teachers as the teachers who take a personal interest in each student, who try to understand each student and his or her problems, who encourage students in the subjects taught so that they will achieve high grades, and, finally, who inspire students to set high goals in life for themselves.

3. *Back to basics.* This movement has support throughout the nation and, of course, many school systems have already made changes to give more attention to the so-called basics. Even so, many people want greater emphasis placed upon what they often describe as the "fundamentals," meaning reading, writing, and arithmetic.

4. *More parental involvement.* A frequent suggestion is for closer teacher/parent relationships. Many complain that teachers show a poor attitude in communicating with parents. They suggest more conferences between parents and teachers. They would like to know much more about what parents can do in the home to help their children in school.

5. *Higher scholastic standards.* The public has been made aware through the media of declining test scores throughout the nation. People read about automatic promotion and about young persons who are graduated from high school but who can barely read or write. They complain that not enough homework is given to their children. Some say the school day should be longer. They say it is too easy to get good grades.

6. *More education about health hazards.* The widespread use of alcohol, drugs, marijuana, and cigarettes by young people has become an important worry to many parents. They want help from the schools. They want schools to point out the dangers of alcohol and drug abuse and smoking, and they want the schools to establish rules that will be a deterrent.

7. *More emphasis on careers.* Parents whose children do not intend to go on to college want to be sure that their children are ready to fill some kind of job after they are graduated. Even in the case of those whose children plan to enter college, parents see a need to give guidance about careers that are available, the abilities required, and the rewards offered in different occupations.

Automatic Promotion

If a national referendum were held on the promotion issue, a majority of more than 2-1 would favor promoting children from grade to grade only if they can pass examinations. Answers to a second question asked of all respondents should give some comfort to those who oppose such a requirement. By an even larger majority, the public would favor offering special remedial classes in the subjects students fail and not require students who fail to repeat the whole year's work.

This leaves unanswered the question of what to do with those students who do not pass the examinations even after they have received extra instruction.

The question was:

> **What do you think should be done with students who do not pass the examinations even *after* they have received extra instruction?**

Here the public is divided on the policies to be followed, with about half saying that in this situation the child should repeat the grade and the rest suggesting further help or placing the child in a special program.

An interesting aspect of the public's views on automatic promotion comes to light in an examination of the groups who support and those who oppose automatic or social promotion. Those who are most likely to have children who fail in their schoolwork — poorly educated parents — are the ones most in favor of requiring students to pass tests for promotion. At the other extreme, persons who have completed high school or college are most in favor of automatic or social promotion.

Those persons interviewed in the survey who have no children of school age are more in favor of the test requirement for promotion than those who now have children attending the public or the nonpublic schools.

The question posed was this:

> **In your opinion, should children be promoted from grade to grade *only* if they can pass examinations?**

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes, they should	68	71	60	59
No	27	24	35	38
Don't know/no answer	5	5	5	3

Further breakdowns follow:

	Yes, They Should	No	Don't Know/ No Answer
Race			
White	69	27	4
Nonwhite	61	29	10
Age			
18-29	64	33	3
30-49	63	32	5
50 & over	74	20	6
Education			
Grade school	79	13	8
High school	66	30	4
College	65	30	5
Region			
East	62	33	5
Midwest	66	29	5
South	76	20	4
West	67	27	6

The next question asked was:

Should students who fail be required to take special remedial classes in the subjects they fail or should they be required to repeat the whole year's work?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes, special remedial classes	81	80	82	87
No, repeat whole year's work	14	14	14	9
Don't know/no answer	5	6	4	4

Local, State, or National Tests?

If promotion and graduation are to be based upon tests, who should prepare the tests — the local school system, the state, or the federal government?

The public is divided on this issue, but a plurality would favor having such examinations prepared by the local school system.

Obviously, this is a question that needs to be debated at great length. The arguments pro and con are not well known to the general public; the answers, therefore, should be regarded as indicative but by no means final.

The question was worded in this manner:

> **Some people believe that since every community has a different racial and occupational mix, tests given in different subjects for promotion should be prepared for that school system only. Other people think the tests should be prepared on a statewide basis. Still others think that they should be prepared on a national basis to be given to students in the same grade throughout the nation. Which of these three ways would you prefer — having tests prepared on a local, state, or national basis?**

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Tests should be prepared on a:				
Local basis	37	38	36	38
State basis	25	24	[illegible]	19
National basis	28	27	[illegible]	39
Don't know/no answer	10	11	7	4

It will be noted that parents of children now attending nonpublic schools are evenly divided as to whether tests should be prepared by the local school system or the federal government. Residents of suburban communities are also evenly divided on this point as are those in cities of 500,000 to 999,999.

Equal Educational Opportunity

A wide difference of opinion is found between the views of whites and blacks on the question of equal educational opportunity. By a margin of 52 to 38, nonwhites hold the view that minorities do not have the same educational opportunities as whites. On the other hand, whites are overwhelmingly of the opinion that blacks do have the same educational opportunities.

An interesting difference comes to light when the views of Northern blacks are compared with the views of Southern blacks, as the following table shows.

The question asked was this:

> **In your opinion, do black children and other**

minorities in this community have the same educational opportunities as white children?

	Yes, They Do %	No, They Do Not %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
Southern whites	85	10	5
Southern blacks	54	37	9
Northern whites	86	8	6
Northern blacks	21	67	12

It will be noted, from the responses to another question in this same survey, that Northern blacks give their public schools the lowest rating of all groups in the nation, whereas Southern blacks give the public schools in that part of the nation a favorable rating, comparable to that given by whites.

Parents with children in the schools — both public and nonpublic — say by a large majority that blacks have the same educational opportunities as whites, as the following results show:

Same Educational Opportunities?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes, same opportunities	80	78	86	82
No	14	15	11	14
Don't know/no answer	6	7	3	4

Further breakdowns:

	Yes %	No %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
NATIONAL TOTALS	80	14	6
Sex			
Men	80	15	5
Women	80	13	7
Race			
White	86	8	6
Nonwhite	38	52	10
Age			
18-29	74	19	7
30-49	80	15	5
50 & over	85	9	6
Community size			
1 million & over	63	29	8
500,000 — 999,999	81	14	5
50,000 — 499,999	82	13	5

2,500 — 49,999	85	10	5
Under 2,500	88	5	7
Education			
Grade school	75	16	9
High school	83	11	6
College	78	16	6

Marijuana Use

The use of marijuana by high school and junior high students is widespread. It is regarded as a serious problem in all sections of the nation — in the smallest communities as well as the largest cities. In the central city of metropolitan areas, the problem is regarded as serious by the greatest percentage of those interviewed. In the central cities 74% say it is a serious problem, 16% say it isn't, and 10% have no opinion.

Perhaps the best informed on marijuana use are those who now have children enrolled in the public schools. Interestingly, their opinion closely parallels the views of the nation as a whole.

The question was worded as follows:

> **From what you have heard or read, is the use of marijuana by students enrolled in junior high (middle school) or high school here a serious problem, or not?**

The same question was asked about alcohol and hard drugs.

Marijuana Use

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes, it's a serious problem here	66	65	65	75
No, it isn't	20	19	22	17
Don't know/no answer	14	16	13	8

Further breakdowns:

	Yes, Is Serious %	No, Is Not %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
NATIONAL TOTALS	66	20	14
Sex			
Men	64	23	13
Women	67	17	16

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Race			
White	66	20	14
Nonwhite	63	17	20
Age			
18-29	61	28	11
30-49	63	22	15
50 & over	72	12	16
Community size			
1 million & over	66	17	17
500,000 — 999,999	65	22	13
50,000 -- 499,999	71	17	12
2,500 — 49,999	67	20	13
Under 2,500	61	23	16
Central city	74	16	10
Education			
Grade school	70	10	20
High school	66	19	13
College	59	27	14

Alcohol Use

Of those interviewed, almost the same percentage report that alcohol (beer, wine, liquor) has become a serious problem for students attending junior and senior high school as say that marijuana is a serious problem. Again, the problem is nationwide in scope. Findings are almost the same for every section of the nation and for cities and communities of all population sizes, except the very smallest.

Parents with children now attending public school hold virtually the same views as those less familiar with the local school situation. The question:

What about the use of alcohol (beer, wine, liquor) by students here? Is it a serious problem, or not?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes, it's a serious problem here	64	67	60	58
No, it isn't	19	17	23	17
Don't know/no answer	17	16	17	25

The highest percentage for alcohol use was found in the central cities, lowest in the towns under 2,500 population.

Hard Drug Use

The use of hard drugs (heroin, cocaine, etc.) is regarded as a serious problem for junior and senior high school students in their communities by a third of those interviewed throughout the nation. However, about one person in four claims not to be well enough informed to have an opinion.

Contrary to the replies concerning marijuana and alcohol, respondents say that hard drug use is much more common in the bigger cities than elsewhere. But even respondents in the smallest communities report some use.

Northern blacks are most inclined to report use of hard drugs as a serious problem in the schools attended by local children. As the following results indicate, a wide difference of opinion is found between the North and the South:

	Hard Drug Use		
	Yes, a Serious Problem Here %	No %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
Race/region			
Southern whites	29	49	22
Southern blacks	23	51	26
Northern whites	36	39	25
Northern blacks	59	27	14
Community size			
1 million & over	49	29	22
500,000 — 999,999	39	37	24
50,000 — 499,999	39	41	20
2,500 — 49,999	29	41	30
Under 2,500	21	52	27
Central city	52	34	14
Education			
Grade school	40	25	35
High school	37	40	23
College	29	50	21
Region			
East	34	37	29
Midwest	39	39	22
South	28	49	23
West	41	36	23

Persons who do not have children attending the local public schools are more inclined than public school parents to say that hard drug use is a serious problem for junior and senior high school students in their community. The question was:

What about hard drug use (heroin, cocaine, etc.)? Is it a serious problem among students here?

	National Totals %	No Children in Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes, it's a serious problem here	35	38	26	40
No, it isn't	41	38	49	37
Don't know/no answer	24	24	25	23

Adult Education

A surprisingly large number of individuals throughout the nation would be interested in taking special adult education courses or training. Of course, many factors are taken into account before the desire to continue one's education is put in action, e.g., time, availability, cost. But evidence from the present survey strongly suggests that through proper planning local school systems could make far better use of their facilities by expanding adult education courses.

Nearly a third of all adults in the nation claim to have taken, at some time in their lives, adult education courses. Of those who have taken a course at some time, about one adult in nine (11%) says that he or she has taken such a course during the last year, 7% say one to three years ago, and 12% say over three years ago, with 1% giving no response.

The following questions were asked first:

Are you now taking, or have you ever taken, any courses in an adult education program? (If yes) When was that?

All of those reached in the survey were then asked:

Would you be interested next year in taking any special courses or training in any fields or in any subjects? (If yes) In what?

Four in 10 of those questioned (41%) said they would be interested in taking such a course or training. If this percentage is applied to the whole adult population, a staggering number — 60 million — say they would be interested. But, as pointed out above, this number would have to be heavily discounted because few schools could offer the courses at the right time and at the right cost. However, the figures do indicate that there is room for much expansion in the field of adult education.

What courses or training would interest these individuals? When asked specifically to name the courses or training, respondents fall into four main categories (ranked in order of mention):

1. Job-related courses (typing, accounting, computers, general business economics, etc.)
2. Liberal arts (English, mathematics, art and music, science, etc.)
3. Technical-vocational courses (auto mechanics, carpentry, drafting, etc.)
4. Hobbies (arts and crafts, photography, sewing, cooking, home decorating, etc.)

Interesting differences show up when adults are grouped according to whether they have children now enrolled in school and the type of school.

Have You Ever Taken Any Adult Education Courses?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes, have taken adult education courses	31	29	34	41
No, have not	68	70	65	59
Don't recall/no answer	1	1	1	*

*Less than 1%

More adults with children attending school claim to have taken an adult education course than adults without children. And when asked about taking a course next year, a greater number of parents of public and parochial school children say they would be interested than do those with no children presently attending school.

Would You Be Interested Next Year In Taking a Course?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes, would be interested	41	36	54	54
No, would not	54	59	41	43
Don't know/no answer	5	5	5	3

Importance of a College Education Today

In the postwar era, colleges and universities in the U.S. prepared for a great increase in college enrollments. Each year a higher percentage of high school graduates entered institutions of higher learning, and many college authorities assumed that this constantly increasing percentage of high school graduates going on to college would continue for many years.

The forecasts proved to be wrong. The trend flattened out, and at the same time the birthrate began to decline. Therefore it is a matter of prime concern to discover the attitudes of the people, and especially of parents of children now in school, toward the importance of a college education today.

This question was asked:

How important is a college education today — very important, fairly important, or not too important?

	National Totals %	No Children in Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Very important	36	35	38	34
Fairly important	46	44	48	54
Not too important	16	19	12	11
Don't know/no answer	2	2	2	1

Unfortunately, questions dealing with the importance of a college education were not included in earlier surveys in this series. The findings from the present survey will, therefore, have to serve as a benchmark for future studies.

Further breakdowns:

	Very Important %	Fairly Important %	Not Too Important %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
Race				
White	35	47	16	2
Nonwhite	46	32	18	4
Community size				
1 million & over	41	39	18	2
500,000 — 999,999	35	45	19	1
50,000 — 499,999	38	46	14	2

2,500 — 49,999	36	44	18	2
Under 2,500	31	51	16	2
Education				
Grade school	44	33	18	5
High school	34	46	19	1
College	35	52	11	2
Region				
East	38	47	13	2
Midwest	32	49	17	2
South	40	44	14	2
West	35	40	24	1
Income				
$20,000 & over	33	49	16	2
$15,000 — $19,999	31	53	14	2
$10,000 — $14,999	33	40	26	1
$7,000 — $9,999	37	48	15	—
Under $7,000	45	39	13	3

Parents of children now attending school hold views close to the national average, and they will be influential in their children's decision about college attendance. Slightly more than a third of those interviewed believe that a college education is "very important" today, nearly one-half say "fairly important," and one in eight believes that a college education is "not too important."

One of the most interesting findings from the present survey is that persons in the disadvantaged categories, both in terms of race and income, are the ones who place the greatest importance on a college education.

In fact, the groups attaching the highest importance to a college education are blacks, individuals whose education did not go beyond grade school, and those earning less than $7,000 a year.

Minimum Requirements for Graduation

Most states are now concerned with establishing minimum requirements for graduation from high school. In effect, these requirements will apply chiefly to those students who do not intend to enter college but who plan to take a job, or job training, after they finish high school. Typically, colleges set their own requirements.

Because of the current interest in minimum requirements, a question asked in the 1975 survey was repeated this year. Ten areas of learning were covered, and respondents were asked in the case of each to say whether in their opinion the requirement as stated was "very important," "fairly important," or "not important."

Requirements that top the list are writing, reading, and arithmetic. Two others also get high scores: knowing the health hazards of smoking, alcohol, and drugs; and having a salable skill, such as typing, auto mechanics, etc.

The three requirements that receive less than a 50% vote as "very important" are knowledge of world affairs, the history of mankind, and knowing a foreign language.

Results from the 1978 question are approximately the same as those found in 1975. One question was added to the 1975 list this year — the question dealing with health hazards — and a slight change was made in the wording of the question dealing with reading.

The results below show the percentage of all respondents who regard each requirement as written as "very important," "fairly important," and "not important." The results have been listed in descending order, based upon the percentage who say the requirement is "very important."

> **What requirements, if any, would you set for graduation from high school for those students *who do not plan to go on to college* but who plan to take a job or job training following graduation? I'll read off a number of requirements, and then you tell me how important each one is as a requirement for graduation for these students. We would like to know whether you think it is very important, fairly important, or not important.**

How important is it that these students . . .	Very Important %	Fairly Important %	Not Important %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
. . . be able to write a letter of application using correct grammar and correct spelling?	90	9	*	1
. . .be able to read well enough to follow an instruction manual for home appliances?	86	12	1	1
. . .know enough arithmetic to be able to figure out such a problem as the total square feet in a room?	84	14	1	1
. . .know the health hazards of smoking, use of alcohol, marijuana, and other drugs?	83	14	2	1
. . .have a salable skill, such as typing, auto mechanics, nurse's				

*Less than 1%

aids, business machines?	79	17	3	1
...know something about the U.S. government, the political parties, voting procedures?	66	30	3	1
...know something about the history of the U.S., such as the Constitution, Bill of Rights, and the like?	61	31	7	1
...know something about the major nations of the world today, their kind of government, and their way of life?	42	46	10	2
...know something about the history of mankind, the great leaders in art, literature?	30	48	21	1
...know a foreign language?	16	32	50	2

Importance Placed Upon Extracurricular Activities

Those who believe in the importance of extracurricular activities in the schools will find support from the present survey. Approximately half of the parents with children now enrolled in school regard these activities as "very important." About four in 10 say they are "fairly important," and only one parent in eight says they are "not too important" or "not at all important."

This is the question asked:

I'd like your opinion about extracurricular activities such as the school band, dramatics, sports, the school paper. How important are these to a young person's education — very important, fairly important, not too important, or not at all important?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Very important	45	44	47	51
Fairly important	40	40	40	38
Not too important	9	9	10	9
Not at all important	4	4	2	2
Don't know/no answer	2	3	1	*

*Less than 1%

Opportunities for Finding Part-Time Jobs

In earlier generations young persons acquired work habits through part-time jobs that they could hold while attending school. In our present industrial-technological society most of these jobs are vanishing.

To discover how difficult it is for young people today to find part-time jobs, and in what situations they are most likely to be found, this question was asked:

> **In your opinion, are the opportunities for young people to obtain part-time jobs in this community good, only fair, or poor?**

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Good	28	28	29	34
Only fair	39	39	39	36
Poor	25	23	27	24
Don't know/no answer	8	10	5	6

The results show that part-time jobs are difficult to find in all sections of the nation — in the large cities as well as the small communities. Blacks find it particularly difficult to find part-time jobs for their children in their communities, especially blacks who live in the North.

Another breakdown:

	Good %	Only Fair %	Poor %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
NATIONAL TOTALS	28	39	25	8
Race				
White	30	40	22	8
Nonwhite	14	33	47	6
Community size				
1 million & over	27	34	27	12
500,000 — 999,999	32	31	24	13
50,000 — 499,999	35	44	16	5
2,500 — 49,999	25	39	25	11
Under 2,500	23	41	32	4
Region				
East	24	37	30	9
Midwest	32	40	20	8
South	28	43	22	7
West	30	35	27	8
Race-region				
Northern white	30	38	23	9
Southern white	31	43	19	7
Northern black	11	30	54	5
Southern black	15	43	37	5

Course Credit for Community Service

The proposal to give high school credit to juniors and seniors for community service — a plan now followed in some schools — meets with widespread approval across the nation. Eighty-seven percent of all respondents would like to have juniors and seniors earn course credit for giving service to the community. Those with children as well as those without children in school hold the same view.

The question was put to respondents in this fashion:

> **A plan has been suggested to enable all juniors and seniors in high school to perform some kind of community service for course credit — such as working in a hospital or recreation center, beautifying parks, or helping law enforcement officers. Would you like to have such a plan adopted in this community, or not?**

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes, would like plan	87	88	86	86
No, would not	8	7	11	10
Don't know/no answer	5	5	3	4

What To Do with Closed Schools

Because declining school enrollments have forced the closing of many schools, public opinion was sought on what to do with these buildings. The question:

> **Many schools are being closed today because of a drop in enrollment. What suggestions do you have as to how vacant school buildings might be used?**

Suggestions for the use of vacant school buildings are many and range in the following order, based upon the number of mentions given each use:

1. Community activities
2. Adult education centers
3. Vocational and job training
4. Cultural centers (museums, libraries, concerts, exhibitions, theater)
5. Senior citizen centers
6. Youth activities
7. Make into offices
8. Use for governmental agencies

9. Sell or rent
10. Convert to apartments

No doubt many districts have already instituted some of these uses, but other school systems have simply closed down such buildings and now could be faced with increased vandalism.

Making Parents Responsible for Vandalism

School vandalism has been a big problem for many schools throughout the nation. Students themselves are sometimes the ones caught doing damage, and the question arises as to how to deal with these students.

In the present survey, this question was put to respondents:

> **Should parents be made financially responsible, or not, for damage to school property done by their children?**

Parents should be held financially responsible for the damage to school property done by their children, in the opinion of almost all citizens, as well as of almost all parents with children now enrolled in school.

Make Parents Financially Responsible

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes, they should be	86	85	88	93
No, they shouldn't	11	12	10	6
Don't know/no answer	3	3	2	1

Separating Vocational Education from School

The proposal that vocational education be separated from the school and be conducted in a separate location by other agencies such as business or industry does not carry much appeal to parents with children now attending school. Nor does it appeal particularly to those who have no children of school age.

The chief reason given by respondents for not approving this plan is that it takes children out of the school environment and would deprive them of educational training in the basics. Those who favor the plan stress the importance of on-the-job training, that business has more know-how than vocational teachers, and that students would acquire a better understanding of what business and industry are all about. At the same time, there is much sentiment for combining the two kinds of education — with students spending part of the day in the classroom and part of the day in the real world of business and industry.

The questions were worded:

> **In your opinion, should vocational education be separated from the school and conducted in a separate location by other agencies such as business or industry? Why do you say this?**

Separate Vocational Education?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes, should separate	32	34	28	30
No, should not	53	48	62	60
Don't know/no answer	15	18	10	10

Dealing with Absenteeism

Currently one of the most difficult problems for schools to deal with is absenteeism. And for this reason the views of parents with children now attending school are especially important.

Parents of children enrolled in public or nonpublic schools believe, by a large majority, that students who are absent from school without good reason should be forced to attend. Moreover, by an even larger majority, they believe that parents should be held responsible for their children's school attendance.

Two questions were asked:

> **In some of our schools, absenteeism is as high as 40% on a given day. In your opinion, should those students who are frequently absent *without good reason* be dismissed from school, or should they be forced to attend?**

> **Should or should not parents be held responsible for their children's school attendance?**

What To Do with Students

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Should be dismissed	19	20	17	15
Should be forced to attend	63	62	65	78
No action should be taken	6	6	5	2
Don't know/no answer	12	12	13	5

Should Parents Be Held Responsible?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Parents should be made responsible	86	85	89	92
Parents should not be	6	7	4	3
Don't know/no answer	8	8	7	5

Confidence in School Boards

Citizens of the nation give their school boards a vote of confidence. School boards get their highest vote of confidence in the Midwest and South and in the smaller communities. The lowest vote is recorded in the cities with one million population or more. Northern blacks, of all groups, give their school boards the lowest rating. And, as noted elsewhere, they also give their schools the lowest rating. Southern blacks, on the other hand, give their school boards a rating above the national average.

The question:

> **Thinking about the school board in your school district, how much respect and confidence do you have in its ability to deal with school problems — a great deal of confidence, a fair amount, very little, or none?**

	Great Deal %	Fair Amount %	Very Little %	None %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
NATIONAL TOTALS	18	43	16	6	17
Sex					
Men	18	43	16	6	17
Women	18	43	16	5	18
Race					
White	18	44	16	6	16

Nonwhite	16	35	21	7	21
Age					
18-29	13	42	23	5	17
30-49	20	45	17	5	13
50 & over	20	41	11	7	21
Community size					
1 million & over	14	32	21	9	24
500,000 — 999,999	16	43	11	6	24
50,000 — 499,999	14	48	19	6	13
2,500 — 49,999	20	48	17	4	11
Under 2,500	24	43	13	4	16
Central city	12	39	22	8	19
Education					
Grade school	23	31	14	4	28
High school	18	44	17	6	15
College	16	47	17	6	14
Region					
East	14	44	15	7	20
Midwest	22	39	18	3	18
South	22	44	16	4	14
West	12	44	16	10	18
Race-region					
Northern white	17	44	15	6	18
Southern white	22	43	18	5	12
Northern black	12	31	26	11	20
Southern black	23	46	10	2	19

It will come as some comfort to local school boards that parents of children now enrolled in the public schools give their school boards a higher rating than does the general public.

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Great deal of confidence	18	17	23	10
Fair amount	43	39	52	46
Very little	16	17	13	19
None	6	6	5	8
Don't know/no answer	17	21	7	17

Influence of Groups on Local Education

About one American adult in five believes there is a group of people in the local community that has more influence than it should in the way the schools are run. But the groups mentioned vary widely, and no group is named by more than a small minority.

Oddly enough, in the list of groups believed to have too much influence, the local school board is often named. This underscores a finding from another survey that many persons are wholly unaware of the function of local school boards.

Politicians receive some mentions, as do blacks and the NAACP, the National Congress of Parents and Teachers (PTA), and "the wealthy." But, on the whole, there is no group that, throughout the nation, seems to exercise too much influence, in the public's view.

The question was worded thus:

> **In your opinion, is there any group of people in this community that has more influence than it should have in the way schools are run? (If yes) Who is that?**

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes, too much influence	20	18	24	26
No	46	43	52	42
Don't know/no answer	34	39	24	32

Financing the Public Schools

The adoption of Proposition 13 in California and resistance throughout the nation to higher property taxes have focused attention on the problem of how best to finance the public schools.

When the public is questioned about how the public schools are presently financed, about half (49%) name property or real estate taxes, or say "local taxes." Surprisingly few are acquainted with other sources of revenue. As a matter of fact, for the nation as a whole 48% of the revenues to finance the public schools come from local sources, 44% from the state, and 8% from the federal government. However, only one person in 9 (11%) of those included in the survey mentions that money comes from the federal government, and only one in six (16%) specifically mentions state sources. The following question was asked:

> **There has been much discussion in the nation about the best way to finance the public schools. Do you happen to know where *most* of the money comes from to finance schools in this community? Where?**

A second question dealing with school financing asked if the respondent were satisfied or dissatisfied with this way of raising money to support the public schools. Here is the question:

Are you, yourself, satisfied or dissatisfied with this way of raising the money?

When the answers to this question are then related to the answers given to the previous question about how the schools are financed, the results show:

	Satisfied %	Dissatisfied %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
Those who named:			
Property taxes	43	52	5
Federal sources	68	21	11
State sources	68	20	12

A third question dealing with school financing was asked of those who said they were dissatisfied with the present way of financing the schools:

What other way would you prefer?

Responses to this question indicate that many would prefer that state and federal sources be relied upon to a greater extent. As a favored way to support the schools, they cite income taxes and sales taxes, or they simply say that money should come from the state and federal governments.

The public's wish to lower property taxes in favor of increased state taxes was reported in 1970 in this survey series and then again in 1971 and 1972. In those years the survey question was worded as follows:

It has been suggested that state taxes be increased for everyone in order to let the state government pay a greater share of school expense and to reduce local property taxes. Would you favor an increase in state taxes so that real estate taxes could be lowered on local property?

	1970 %	1971 %	1972 %
For	54	46	55
Against	34	37	34
No opinion	12	17	11

In the years since 1970 a smaller percentage of the funds to support the public schools has come from property taxes and a larger percentage has come from state and federal sources.

One fact brought to light by the questions dealing with school financing could prove worrisome to educators in the future. When asked what other way they would prefer to finance schools, a surprisingly large number of persons volunteered the comment that people with children in the schools should pay a special tax and that the elderly and those without children in the schools should not have to pay any tax to support the public schools.

Those who are interested in the continued welfare of the public schools should enlighten the public as to the need to support public school education in a democracy such as ours, should inform the public as to how the schools are presently supported, and, hopefully, work out an acceptable way to support the schools.

State and Federal Regulations

Evidence grows that the public is becoming aware of state and federal efforts to regulate to a greater extent the educational programs of local schools. Big government, other surveys show, is being regarded by many citizens as an undesirable trend in national life.

To discover the public's attitudes toward government regulation — state and federal — and how it may affect the local schools, this question was asked:

> **Some people worry that the state and the federal government are adopting many regulations regarding educational matters which don't take account of the local school situation. Do you think these actions by the state and the federal government are more likely to help, or more likely to hinder, public school education here?**

While many persons have not made up their minds on this question (28% nationally), those who have an opinion believe, by a 2-1 ratio, that state and federal regulations are more likely to hinder than to help.

When asked "Why do you say this?" those who say that state and federal regulations are likely to help point to the greater expertise of those in higher levels of government. They say that higher standards will be required, that local politics aren't involved, and that new and better programs will be introduced.

Those who say that state and federal regulations are likely to hinder the local schools point to specific programs of which a majority of local residents do not approve, such as busing, bilingual language instruction, avoidance of prayers, and school building construction requirements that are both costly and needless. But the reason advanced by most of those who are opposed is that state and federal regulations ignore the vast differences in the problems of big-city schools and those in small towns, of rich suburban communities and those located in impoverished industrial areas, those with a high percentage of minorities and those with a small percentage.

Greater opposition to state and federal regulations is found among parents with children now enrolled in nonpublic schools than among parents of children now attending public schools.

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
State and federal regulations help	23	23	24	14
Hinder	44	43	46	54
Make no difference	5	5	5	5
Don't know/no answer	28	29	25	27

In recent years, in this same series of surveys, questions have twice been asked about federal and state control versus local control.

On both occasions the findings show the public strongly in favor of local control. A question asked in the 1976 survey revealed that two-thirds of those questioned want their local school boards to have greater responsibility in running the schools. In the 1977 survey a majority of approximately the same size favored giving local school authorities jurisdiction over how money is to be spent in carrying out programs mandated by federal agencies.

Subjects Found Most Useful in Later Life

What can be learned from those who have finished high school and who have had the opportunity to make use of their school experience in later life? To discover how adults now regard the kind of education they received in high school, this question was asked:

> **What subjects that you studied or experiences that you gained in high school have you found to be most useful in later life?**

These are the subjects, or experiences, found most useful, in order of mention:

1. English (literature, composition, grammar)
2. Mathematics (arithmetic, business math, etc.)
3. Commercial subjects (typing, bookkeeping, etc.)
4. Extracurricular activities (sports, drama, band, newspaper, etc.)
5. Shop (woodworking, drafting, machines, etc.)
6. History
7. Science
8. Foreign language
9. Psychology
10. Domestic science (sewing, cooking, etc.)

A second question asked:

> **And now thinking only of the subjects that were offered in your high school, are there any subjects you wish you had studied and didn't that would be of special help to you now?**

The subject mentioned by far the most often is typing. The list follows, in order of mention:

1. Typing and other secretarial skills
2. Mathematics
3. Shop
4. Foreign languages
5. Science
6. English
7. History
8. Civics
9. Home economics
10. Music

Enjoyment of School

Do young people enjoy going to school today? To shed some light on this question, parents with children now enrolled in school were asked to give their impressions. The question:

> **Just how much or how little does your (eldest) child enjoy going to school — very much, somewhat, or very little?**

Most parents say their children do enjoy going to school. There is little difference between those who attend public schools and those who attend private schools.

	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Enjoy very much	60	63
Somewhat	29	23
Very little	8	6
Don't know/no answer	3	8

Differences do appear when one-parent families are compared with two-parent families, with children in the one-parent families less likely to enjoy school. Mothers are more likely to say that their children do not enjoy school than are fathers. Those living in the East as well as those in large cities are also more likely to say that their children do not enjoy school.

Further breakdowns follow: (Percentages are based on the number of parents only.)

	Very Much %	Somewhat %	Very Little %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
NATIONAL TOTALS	60	28	8	4
Sex				
Men	68	24	3	5
Women	54	31	12	3
Race				
White	60	28	8	4
Nonwhite	61	28	9	2
Age				
18-29	63	18	7	12
30-49	60	32	7	1
50 & over	60	23	11	6
Community size				
1 million & over	51	32	13	4
500,000 — 999,999	58	31	6	5
50,000 — 499,999	59	31	7	3
2,500 — 49,999	63	30	4	3
Under 2,500	66	22	8	4

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Education				
Grade school	61	27	10	2
High school	61	27	10	2
College	58	31	4	7
Region				
East	49	34	12	5
Midwest	63	24	7	6
South	64	26	7	3
West	67	29	4	—
By family				
One-parent families	51	26	11	12
Two-parent families	62	29	7	2

Time Spent with Schoolchildren

With so many mothers working outside the home, the question arises as to how much time parents have to devote to their children of school age. This question was asked:

> **As a parent, how much time do you usually have to devote to your youngster in the evening to assist him/her with his/her homework — enough time, not enough time, or none at all?**

	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Have enough time	64	67
Not enough time	18	17
No time at all	14	5
Don't know/no answer	4	11

Parents with only a grade school education are more likely to say they do not have enough time. In fact, 48% of this group report that they do not have enough time or have none at all. Nonwhites report that they have less time than whites. Further breakdowns follow: (Percentages are based on the number of parents only.)

	Enough Time %	Not Enough Time %	None at All %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
NATIONAL TOTALS	64	17	13	6
Sex				
Men	60	21	12	7
Women	68	14	14	4
Race				
White	65	16	13	6

Nonwhite	59	25	13	3
Age				
18-29	51	19	13	17
30-49	67	19	12	2
50 & over	66	10	19	5
Community size				
1 million & over	62	19	13	6
500,000 — 999,999	79	5	11	5
50,000 — 499,999	59	18	17	6
2,500 — 49,999	65	15	13	7
Under 2,500	64	21	11	4
Education				
Grade school	49	19	29	3
High school	66	17	14	3
College	66	18	6	10
Region				
East	60	16	17	7
Midwest	62	22	8	8
South	65	19	13	3
West	74	11	13	2
By family				
One-parent families	58	12	10	20
Two-parent families	66	18	13	3

COMPOSITION OF THE SAMPLE

Adults	%
No children in schools	68
Public school parents	28*
Parochial school parents	5*

*Total exceeds 32% because some parents have children attending more than one kind of school.

Sex	%
Men	47
Women	53

Age	%
18 to 24 years	17
25 to 29 years	12
30 to 49 years	32
50 years and over	37
Undesignated	2

Occupation	%
Business & professional	27
Clerical & sales	5
Farm	4
Skilled labor	18
Unskilled labor	23
Non-labor force	20
Undesignated	3

Income	%
$20,000 and over	28
$15,000 to $19,999	17
$10,000 to $14,999	19
$ 7,000 to $ 9,999	9
$ 5,000 to $ 6,999	11
$ 3,000 to $ 4,999	8
Under $3,000	5
Undesignated	3

Race	%
White	88
Nonwhite	12

Community size	%
1 million and over	20
500,000 to 999,999	12
50,000 to 499,999	25
2,500 to 49,999	15
Under 2,500	28

Education	%
Elementary grades	16
High school incomplete	14
High school complete	34
Technical, trade, or business school	7
College incomplete	15
College graduate	14
Undesignated	*

*Less than 1%

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Region	**%**	**Political affiliation**	**%**
East	27	Republican	19
Midwest	27	Democrat	43
South	28	Independent	35
West	18	Other	3

THE DESIGN OF THE SAMPLE

The sampling procedure is designed to produce an approximation of the adult civilian population 18 years of age and older, living in the United States, except for those persons in institutions such as prisons or hospitals.

The design of the sample is that of a replicated probability sample, down to the block level in the case of urban areas and to segments of townships in the case of rural areas. Approximately 300 sampling locations are used in each survey. Interpenetrating samples can be provided for any given study when appropriate.

The sample design included stratification by these four size-of-community strata, using 1970 census data: 1) cities of population 1 million and over; 2) 250,000 — 999,999; 3) 50,000 — 249,999; 4) all other population. Each of these strata was further stratified into seven geographic regions: New England, Middle Atlantic, East Central, West Central, South, Mountain, and Pacific. Within each city-size/regional stratum, the population was arrayed in geographic order and zoned into equal-sized groups of sampling units. Pairs of localities were selected in each zone, with probability of selection of each locality proportional to its population size in the 1970 census, producing two replicated samples of localities.

Within localities so selected for which the requisite population data are reported, subdivisions were drawn with the probability of selection proportional to size of population. In all other localities, small definable geographic areas were selected with equal probability.

Separately for each survey, within each subdivision so selected for which block statistics are available, a sample of blocks or block clusters is drawn with probability of selection proportional to the number of dwelling units. In all other subdivisions or areas, blocks or segments are drawn at random or with equal probability.

In each cluster of blocks and each segment so selected, a randomly selected starting point is designated on the interviewer's map of the area. Starting at this point, interviewers are required to follow a given direction in the selection of households until their assignment is completed.

Interviewing is conducted at times when adults, in general, are most likely to be at home, which means on weekends, or if on weekdays, after 4:00 p.m. for women and after 6:00 p.m. for men.

Allowance for persons not at home is made by a "times-at-home" weighting procedure rather than by "call-backs." This procedure is a standard method for reducing the sample bias that would otherwise result from underrepresentation in the sample of persons who are difficult to find at home.

The prestratification by regions is routinely supplemented by fitting each obtained sample to the latest available Census Bureau estimates of the regional distribution of the population. Also, minor adjustments of the sample are made by educational attainment by men and women separately, based on the annual estimates of the Census Bureau (derived from their Current Population Survey) and by age.

In interpreting survey results, it should be borne in mind that all sample surveys are subject to sampling error; that is, the extent to which the results may differ from what would be obtained if the whole population surveyed had been interviewed. The size of such sampling errors depends largely on the number of interviews.

Epilogue

In the public school systems of America, professional personnel are responsible to citizens; boards of education are established to reflect the desires of the public. Therefore, school boards and superintendents need systems to assess community desires, attitudes, and knowledge about the educational process and schooling.

Scientific sampling of public opinion is a means of learning how citizens judge the quality of their schools and the criteria they use in determining the excellence or lack of it in their local school system. Opinion surveys permit investigation of specific educational issues, e.g., community attitudes toward school finances, the professional staff, and school board; acceptability of educational innovations; and public awareness of school problems.

The results will permit decision making that is not influenced by pressure groups, telephone feedback, and random discussions — all of which frequently provide faulty conclusions. If surveys are done periodically, with some basic questions repeated, shifts in public opinion and knowledge can be gauged.

The 10 annual Gallup Polls on public attitudes toward education reprinted in this volume provide a bank of more than 200 questions and results. These results do not apply to any single community; they provide a norm for comparison. Questions and results are not copyrighted and no limitations are placed upon the use of information contained in this volume beyond customary credit to source, accuracy, completeness of quotation, etc.

In early 1979 Phi Delta Kappa's Center for Dissemination of Innovative Programs will publish a complete kit for school district officials desiring to conduct a local poll. The basic manual of instructions for this kit is being prepared by Dr. Gallup. Inquiries about this kit should be addressed to Dr. Wilmer Bugher, Associate Executive Secretary, Phi Delta Kappa, Box 789, Bloomington, IN 47401.

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